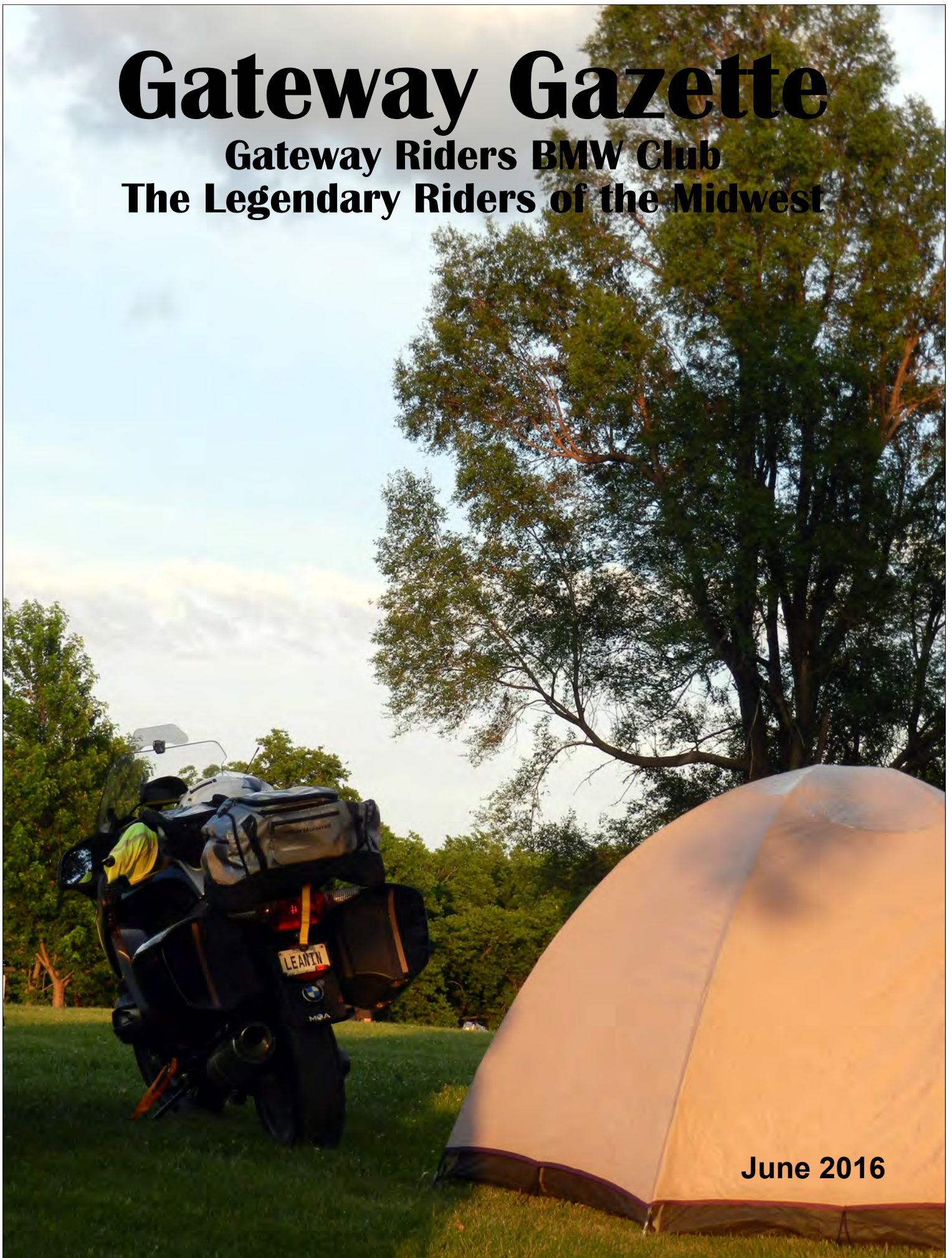


Gateway Gazette

**Gateway Riders BMW Club
The Legendary Riders of the Midwest**



June 2016

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Gateway Riders BMW Club
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President's Column

By Jim Williams

Hi Everyone!

Yaaay! It's finally summer! I hope you have some great summer vacations planned, as well as motorcycle trips or rallies. As I sit here writing to you, I just came home from another wonderful vacation.

One day while basking in the sun on the Mexican beach, I pondered what it would be like to ride through Mexico and other places--what would I encounter, what would I learn? We're an interesting group of motorcyclists who focus on the journey. Just look at our magazine. When does it not have an article of an exotic place with a great story inside? We will hear about the newest motorcycles trying to take the market share that BMW conquered with the GS series. Ok, I do know about the Royal Enfield, Honda, KTM, etc....I just wonder if they have the same quality of experience as we do? I find us as being the unique motorcyclists, ones that look for the best experience possible. We don't have problems wandering into strange places and finding a deep meaning for being there.

Of all the roads here in our wonderful state as well as other states, we can have great adventures without leaving our county, state, or nation. Just think of all the unique places, things to see, beautiful sunrises and sunsets to encounter over the fresh water and ocean beaches. If you find yourself in a blank, then just ask one of us about a great destination. I'm sure you'll find yourself enamored with someone's journey, enough that you'll be going soon!

So why am I sitting here talking about it? Let's all get out there and find another experience, a journey to have and to hold, till death do us part!

— Jim

On the Cover: Craig Pelletier's bike at the Land of Oz Rally at Lake Warnock State Park south of Atchison, Kansas, June 3-5. Photo by Marilyn Roberts.

Summer 2016 Events Calendar

Compiled by Jeff Ackerman, Events Director

Note: The ride starting points depend on the direction we are going. See the list below:

NORTH: The QuikTrip at 2791 Dunn Rd.; it's the QuikTrip at New Halls Ferry and Dunn on the north side of I-270.

SOUTH: The McStop at Pevely (Exit 180 off I-55 at Z) OR the south end of the Dierbergs Mall on Hwy. 21, just south of I-270 (on the left hand or east side of 21 at the first light) OR by the Pink Elephant on Hwy. 141 and Schneider Rd.; just north of Hwy. 21 (across the road from the QuikTrip at Hwy. 141 & Schneider; 2600 S Old Hwy. 141).

WEST: The QuikTrip off I-70 (exit 222) by I-370 at Mid Rivers Mall (on the north side in St. Peters); or the BP just south of Hwy. 40 (I-64) on Long Rd.; or the QuikTrip in Eureka, just south of I-44 (exit 264) on 109.

EAST: The Dierbergs on 21 (south) or QuikTrip at 2791 Dunn (north) – See above.

Shop Rides: Forever Endeavor has shop rides every 3rd Saturday of the month, typically meet at 8:00/leave 8:15 (next rides are July 16 & August 20), followed by a hearty breakfast. Meet at 518 East Osage, Pacific, 63069. 636-938-7336.

We may be posting some impromptu rides during the week over the summer. Watch the Facebook page and the website or an e-mail. These will typically be short notice rides for lunch or dinner when the weather is nice.

* July 2 (Saturday of July 4th weekend): Pack your small cooler with lunch and take a scenic picnic ride with Phil. Meet at the QuikTrip in Eureka at 9:00/leave 9:30. Phil Sulfstede 314-910-9663.

* July 9: Early morning Rider's Choice to beat the heat. Meet at the BP station on Long Rd. at 7:00/leave 7:30. Ride leader needed.

* July 14-17: 44th BMW MOA Rally in Hamburg, NY. Great riding, seminars, workshops, live music and friends – the list is endless. See the MOA magazine or www.bmwmoa.org for details.

NOTE: No meeting in July (except at the National, if you go.)

* July 17: Today is National Ice Cream day and if you didn't go to the National meet at the QuikTrip in Eureka at 9:00/leave at 9:30 and find a nice ice cream place for lunch. Ride leader needed.

* July 24: Ron Bier is leading another south county ride. Meet at the Pink Elephant on Hwy. 141 and Schneider Rd. just north of Hwy 21 and across the road from the QuikTrip (at Hwy. 141 & Schneider; 2600 S Old Hwy. 141) at 9:30/leave at 10:00. Ron Bier 314-623-1363.

* July 30: Another Phil ride. Meet at the QuikTrip in Eureka at 9:00/leave 9:30. Phil Sulfstede 314-910-9663.

* Aug. 6: The Washington County Fair is underway at the Lion's Den in Potosi (where we hold the rally). Lead a ride down to the fair and spend some money to help out the Lions. Meet at the Dierbergs Mall at 8:00/leave 8:30. Ride leader needed.

* Aug. 13: Chris is leading an early morning breakfast ride to beat the heat. After breakfast you can head for Council Bluffs Lake on DD, south of Potosi for Jay's campout (see the next event). Meet at the Dierbergs Mall at 6:30/leave 7:00. Breakfast about 9 a.m. Chris Kerckhoff 314-422-1888.

* Aug. 13/ 14: Jay is organizing a swimming and campout ride to Council Bluffs Lake south of Potosi on DD. Come for swimming in the lake and stay for camping. The Perseid meteors will peak on Aug. 12 or 13th this year so you should be able to see some meteors. However, the moon will be waxing towards full so its light may interfere. Meet at the Dierbergs Mall at 9:00/leave 9:30. Jay Green 618-920-2314.

Continued on next page

Events, continued from previous page

* August 17: Wednesday general meeting at Miss Sheri's at 9967 Manchester Rd., St. Louis, MO 63122. When you come through the doors, the meeting room is to the left. They need us out earlier, so arrive no later than 6:30 p.m. if you plan on eating. Meeting starts at 7:15 sharp.

* Aug. 20: Late summer ride with Phil. Meet at the BP station on Long Rd. at 9:00/leave 9:30. Phil Sulfstede 314-910-9663.

* Aug. 28: GS Ride in Warren County. We will do a variation on one of the routes set up by the old KTM dealer and end up in Hermann. This is a GS (not a gravel road) ride and will include riding through Lost Creek for about 100 yds. as well as numerous low water crossings. Meet at the BP station on Long Rd. at 8:00/leave at 8:30. Jeff Ackerman 314-239-4504.

NOTE: Ron Bier is planning on having a party for the club at his place on Sept. 17.

Events that are starred * are point events. Any motorcycle rallies greater than 200 miles away or any BMW rallies are point rides, even if not listed. Note: See the MOA magazine or website: www.bmwmoa.org for more rally information.
GR

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Land of Oz Rally

By Marilyn Roberts

This year was the second year for the Land of Oz Rally at Lake Warnock just south of the Kansas town of Atchinson. This is a fabulous site. The terrain is rolling, grassy, and if you want to camp under trees there is plenty of space for that. From the Rally Central area you can look off into the distance at Kansas cornfields or look the other way at the Putnam Forest. It didn't hurt that this year the weather was also fabulous with temperatures not above the low 80s and plenty of sunshine.

At the last minute I arranged to ride with the Ackermans, leaving the St. Peters QuikTrip at 7:15 a.m., a bit earlier than I would have left had I ridden solo. Some rain was moving into the St. Louis area from the south so the early start got us north in plenty of time to avoid the wet. Jeff and Mary took a northern route up Hwy. 79 to Hwy. 36 west across Missouri, with a nice little corner cut-off to Hwy. 36 on some alphabet roads. The route I'd planned for myself via Base Camp on my new BMW Navigator Street GPS was similar. Craig and his son Alex chose to take I-70 through Kansas City and they got wet by staying south.

We stopped for lunch at Hank & Tanks BBQ in Hamilton in western Missouri. Hank and Tank were very appreciative of the repeat business. They remembered Jeff and Mary from last year. A guy on an R1150R on his way to Atchison was also there, chatting with an older gentleman who rode in on a Harley. We sat outside in the portico shade in a nice breeze.

The five of us arrived close in time around 2 p.m., leaving plenty of time to set up camp and get beverages before the evening's chili dinner, made by Kansas club member Karen Mans. I joined Mary on Spydie, her CanAm Spyder, for a ride into town for beer, ice and some iced tea. It was a comfy ride but there was no leaning in the corners! At the liquor store Spydie's front trunk gobbled up six 6-packs of bottled beer, and one sidecase took a bag of ice and my riding jacket (the sun was pretty warm and I'd gotten hot setting up my tent). At Casey's we got iced tea and snacks, which I held in a bag on my lap. Returning to the lake I filmed video #1 of a ride on an unconventional vehicle and posted to Facebook.

As I wandered around the rally grounds, Rally Chair Don Hamblin drove up on a white Honda Helix with a Globe sidecar. The rig was borrowed, and it was his drive-around-the-rally-site vehicle. He asked if I wanted a ride. Well, of course! Sitting in the small sidecar, a decal front and center stated, "It's NOT a damn moped! It's a scooter." I did not film a video of this ride and I should have. It was ride #2 on an unconventional vehicle.

As the afternoon wore on we wondered where Larry and Phil Drieci (not a Gateway member) were. They left St. Louis an hour before we did. We were camped where the group camped last year, so Larry should be able to find us, but we kept our eyes peeled. Eventually Jeff phoned Larry and found out that Phil had low-sided turning onto Hwy. 79 from Salt Creek Road, not far from home. They were not coming to the rally.

Craig has—well, had—a nice pair of fairly new Tour Master boots that he sat outside his tent near another pair of Tour Master boots except that those boots were older and not as nice. The owner of the older boots snatched up Craig's boots, probably by mistake, leaving the older ones. Craig spent the weekend looking for his boots—asking around and posting a note on the message board—to no avail. When he and Alex went for Mexican food Saturday afternoon and riding home, he had to stick his feet in someone else's old shoes. It was an omen; he said well maybe he'd just have to get a new pair of Forma boots like mine.



I thought the rally food was excellent for the \$35 at-the-gate price. Friday night's chili and crackers hit the spot. The Girl Scouts provided breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning for a donation to their European trip. Note—we did not see any young ladies of Girl Scout age, only folks who were probably parents did the cooking and serving. Saturday's breakfast was scrambled eggs, sausage, pancakes and orange juice; Sunday's breakfast was biscuits and gravy. Saturday's dinner was catered by Chuck & Hanks River Shack. It featured sliced pork, potato salad, baked beans, bread, several kinds of baked desserts, and Voni was at the end of the line serving up pieces of the Glaves' 50th Wedding Anniversary cake.

Speaking of Voni and Paul, one of the things that pushed me to go to this rally was that Paul was bringing his K75. His K75 used to be mine; I sold it to him 5 years ago when I had to make room in the garage for the F800R which I no longer have. Because the K75 was my first bike I still have a fondness for it—my reason for selling it to Paul who would love it, take care of it, and ride it. And he does. It is no longer the pristine beauty it was when I drove it to The Adobe in Big

Continued on next page



Bend that February but that's what happens when a bike gets loved and ridden. He has put an additional 40K on the bike and they don't wash bikes in the arid Big Bend where water is collected from the roof when it rains. He recently replaced a faulty clutch ring that threw oil all over the underside of the bike (it's still there), did a spline lube, replaced the yellowed windshield with the new one I gave him with the bike (the old one still bore the bad scrape from my deer strike in 2001), and put on new tires. I sat and conversed with Voni about retirement joys, working in art galleries where your art is sold, and the cover of the *May Owners News* (neither of us was offended).

The GS Giants club had its own compound just past Registration. On Saturday they put on a 100 mile GS ride with about 20 participants. I had wandered down that way and found Karen Mans at the GS Giants ride registration table. We sat and talked for quite a while. Jeff did the ride and didn't return to camp until late afternoon, tired and with a muddy bike. He said his Tourance tires were not adequate for some of the soft mud on the ride but unlike some, he didn't fall. A large percentage of the participants fell at some point.

On my way up the hill toward our camp Bruce Weber of the Kansas club stopped and asked if I wanted a ride. Those of you who know me know that I am perfectly capable of walking, and desire to, but Bruce was riding a Chinese 110CC Honda Monkey Bike knock-off. With a sidecar. Of course I wanted a ride. I folded myself into the tiny, wood-slat floor sidecar and off we went. Its 5 hp hauled our butts up the hill with only a slight reduction in speed, and then we took a spin around the circle at rally central. This was video #2 posted to Facebook of ride #3 in an unconventional vehicle.

I walked through the International Friendship Forest, an arboretum containing trees from around the world, including a sycamore tree whose seed had been to the moon on Apollo 14. It was a pleasant area on the Lake Warnock grounds and it's adjacent to Putnam Forest, a dense grove of trees where some folks camped, Jim Shaw included (right). I also sneaked in a shower on Saturday at one of the two on-site showers. With over 300 rally-goers, two showers weren't enough so there were morning and afternoon shuttles to the YMCA.



Downtown Atchison featured a Farmer's Market, flea market, music, and bike show on Saturday. I generally hang around a rally site on Saturday and don't go anywhere, but Mary went. She enjoyed the festivities and visited some shops. Jim went riding.

Craig and Alex went into town for Mexican food. I asked Craig to bring me a beef burrito and he did, along with chips and salsa! And he didn't want any money! He should be saving money for his new Forma boots. He was also a go-fer for Mary, who wanted more ice for the beer cooler.

Next on the docket was dinner catered by Chuck & Hanks River Shack. Jeff, Mary and I were close to the front of the line and got huge servings of everything. Those in the middle of the line got smaller servings of everything. The last few people in line had to wait for more food brought from the restaurant. As I said before, the food was excellent. Dessert was cookies, small cupcakes, or berry shortcake. After the large burrito and chips for lunch my stomach could not hold anymore food once I was finished with dinner. We ate at a picnic table under a tent along with Tom Domek from Iowa and the guy we met at Hank & Tanks BBQ at lunch yesterday.

Sometime during the day Craig noticed that no one had signed up for the Largest Club award, so he signed us up, and we won! In addition, Jim Shaw won a door prize, \$100 off on a Bill Mayer seat. He was happy about that.

At sunset I walked down to the lake/registration area to hear the band. I didn't stay long; the band was so-so and the sunset was calling me to take photos. I was also accumulating the last of the many bug bites that raised large welts and plagued me with itchiness for the next several days; these were not mosquitos. That's what I get for exploring the woods.

The morning shadows were long at 7:15 a.m. when we pulled out of the campground. Taking Hwy. 36, we reversed our route to home except that we took Hwy. 61 south. Craig and Alex rode with us to breakfast at the 36 Diner in Brookfield, Missouri, 2 hours down the road. They had had enough of the bike seats, zoomed ahead, and pulled off for breakfast on their own at the same exit we were taking for the 36 Diner. Serendipitous, or something. After breakfast, Craig wicked it up and left us in his dust. Jim was with us for a short time, then left us at the border to take alphabet roads home.

Back in St. Charles County I was happily sailing along on Hwy. 40 east, almost home. Brake lights. Uh oh. I found myself in a back-up that I couldn't see the end of, creeping along just slow enough that I couldn't engage the clutch fully or get my feet on the pegs. To top it off, I'd been quite comfortable with the liner jacket under my ventilated jacket but now it was a sunny 82 degrees, I wasn't moving, and the cars and trucks around me were cranking out heat. After maybe 20 minutes of that I began to smell the clutch and I worried about engine heat because my R1200R is a 2014, the last of the air/oil cooled engines. I wasn't going to sit there; it was time for a break to cool everything down. I watched folks take the shoulder to Hwy. K and when I was a bit closer, I did, too. On the overpass over Hwy. 40 I saw Craig and Alex sitting in the fast lane, going nowhere. I learned later that Craig and Alex were in the back-up for an hour and that the accident involved 4 cars and a semi (no one seriously hurt).

At the QuikTrip just off the highway I stood in the shade drinking a bottle of tea. A woman and her 2 young children of about 6 years walked past my bike from the pumps. The young boy had his arm extended and stared fondly at my bike. Mom said, "Don't you touch her bike! Either of you!"

I'm not very familiar with that part of St. Charles County but I thought Hwy. K intersected Hwy. 364 at some point. It did. So I went home via Maryland Heights, about 3 times farther than taking Hwy. 40. But that didn't matter because I was hydrated, my jacket liner was stowed away, and the bike had cooled down. **GR**

GS Challenge By Ron Petruska

(Published before on the Gateway BMW site)

Motorcycles have been a part of my life for nearly 40 years, starting back in high school and college. Years ago, I sold my motorcycles to finance my honeymoon. Then came kids and all the activities that go with them. By 2010, I was ready for another bike. After a 3-year, 30,000 mile stint on a Harley, I landed on a BMW.

On vacation in Munich, my wife and I visited BMW World and saw a K1600 on display. That bike looked so cool! I bought one when we got home, rode it around Lake Michigan and then started thinking about trading it in for a GS. In November 2015, I made the move to a 2016 R1200GS in triple black with spoke wheels when they first came out.

I decided that a R1200GS deserves to be ridden off-road, so I signed for the Gateway BMW GS Challenge. The beginner's course was Saturday, and I learned so much from the guys at Black Swan Moto. I'd had a white-knuckle experience on gravel roads before, but now they have me feeling 100% more confident. Walking through the mechanics of how to safely ride on gravel and dirt are invaluable to having a good experience.

There were about 10 riders in our group, which seemed like a good size for instruction. Jeff from [Black Swan](#) explained the basics of weight shifting and how to ride standing up. He would demonstrate the technique and then we'd follow his example through the drills while crossing creeks and riding up and down hills. It was tiring, but very enjoyable.

Gateway salesman Tommy Huff led a ride on Sunday and I had an absolute blast. He has been riding near Potosi since he was a kid and he knows the roads very well. It was the most fun weekend I've ever had on a motorcycle, and I hope to do it again next year.

There are so many good roads (gravel roads and forest service roads) in Missouri that are not paved. Before the R1200GS and the Challenge, I didn't have the opportunity to ride them. Now I'm actively seeking out these kinds of roads and the guys at Gateway BMW have me covered. **GR**

Get Your Kicks on Route 66

By Larry White

One advantage of maturing (not aging) is the opportunity to think back upon past experiences. If one is blessed, as I am, with a selective memory, such thoughts often recall just what is called 'the good old days.' Or, maybe some days one just wonders what it is like to be 'Standing on a corner in Winslow, Arizona.' Combine these thoughts with a feeling that my motorcycle, a BMW G650GS, needs to go on another trip and consider tracing the remnants of what was called US Route 66.

US Route 66 originally ran from Chicago, Illinois to Santa Monica, California. Because no one in his right mind would want to visit Rahm's current Chicago, I decided to focus on the route from Sullivan, Missouri (just south of where I live) to the west coast. After studying Jim Ross & Jerry McClanahan's Route 66 Map Series (one map for each state) and Jim Hinckley's *Travel Route 66, A Guide to the History, Sights, and Destinations Along the Main Street of America*, I was primed for a trip along nostalgic lane. The maps provide turn-by-turn directions, and include the Route 66 changes over the years.

My motorcycles have never really liked heavy traffic and large urban environments too much so I focused mainly upon the rural and small towns, and bypassed major metropolitan areas. Also, my route diverged to allow camping in state parks. After loading the bike with everything that I really did not need, and leaving only the items that I would need later, I left on May 2, 2016 to 'Get my kicks on Route 66.' A few thoughts and opinions about the Route 66 trip follow:

With one notable exception--Oatman, Arizona--Route 66 is not a classic motorcycle road of extreme curves and extreme hills. Instead, Route 66 needs to be enjoyed as a visual journey into our past, and one should enjoy changing scenery as the lush green Missouri hillsides slowly change into the brown semi-arid and desert environment of the west.

Except for Kansas, the old Route 66 roadway often serves as a service road alongside of Interstates I-44 or I-40. This is generally not too exciting, and tends to cut down on the viewing pleasure. Western Oklahoma was bad, but Texas was the worst, with one area where the separation was literally the width of a row of concrete Jersey Barriers. Bouncing along on an old crumbling roadway next to a steady stream of vehicles moving briskly along on a smooth interstate may make one question one's sanity!

Favorite areas of Missouri include "Hooker Cut" (once one of the deepest rock cuts in the US) and "Devil's Elbow" (twisty route over old bridge over Big Piney River) just west of Rolla, and the area west of Springfield, Missouri.

Route 66 through Kansas (just over 13 miles) is far from I-44, and is generally well marked. This is a relief.

Eastern Oklahoma is green, similar to Missouri. The browning starts in the western sections. Route 66 is generally far enough away from I-44 to make for good viewing. Also, it is free, while I-44 in Oklahoma is toll road! Twin Bridges State Park in the northeast corner of Oklahoma is nice, but the night I was there must have been the annual big truck "My Jake-Brake is Louder Than Yours" contest. I never did hear who won! Foss Lake State Park in western Oklahoma was farther from large highways, much nicer, and home to several good looking turkeys.

Santa Rosa Lake State Park in New Mexico was great! Scenic, secluded, and nice camp sites, even including a doe in the early morning.

The best ride in New Mexico was the Santa Fe loop and through a small town called Pecos, where I traded stories of elk hunting with a local guy during a late breakfast. Unfortunately, in the afternoon the wind rose to nearly gale force. I pulled into the Red Rock Park campground, near Gallup, New Mexico, and as soon as I raised my full-face visor, blowing sand nearly filled my eyes and mouth. Closing my visor I went to Gallup for a motel. The next morning snow had covered my motorcycle.

The route in the eastern half of Arizona largely just follows I-40. Thus, I was glad to turn off and ride through the Petrified Forest National Park--well worth the detour! After "standing on a corner in Winslow, Arizona," I headed back to I-40 west and climbed to Flagstaff, Arizona.

At Flagstaff, Arizona I headed south on AX89A to Sedona and Cottonwood. This is a great motorcycle road and it made

Continued on next page

up for hours spent on I-40. It would have been even better if it hadn't been raining and crowded. The combination of crowded roads and campsites on Saturday, and the rain at the higher elevations, led me to ride to the lower Phoenix area. The rain stopped as I headed lower. I spent the following day with an old buddy I had not seen since we worked and rode motorcycles in South Korea 30 years ago. We had a great visit, and I would like to return without waiting 30 years!

Leaving the Phoenix area on US-60 and then AZ-89 I went up to Prescott and Ash Fork. I enjoyed the Saguaro cacti blooming at the lower elevations giving way to the Joshua Trees at the higher elevations. Highway 89 has a nice mountainous section south of Prescott, and some very scenic rock formations north of Prescott.

Back on old route 66 I enjoyed the western part of Arizona and swung far north of I-40 through small towns such as Peach Springs and Valentine. By far the best part was the route through Oatman, Arizona. A small road winds and climbs through the mountainous terrain. This section is a great motorcycle road, but travelers also included several Class-C motorhome rentals, most of which hugged the center, making one duck the extended mirrors! I recommend this for motorcyclists. Just don't forget to pack your "A" game. The burros on Main Street in Oatman are easy to get though, the people not so much.

The Moabi Regional Park, near Needles, California is a good place to camp. Tents can set up anywhere within a large sandy area, and I managed to pitch mine in one of the few shady spots. I met an interesting couple from Vancouver, BC.

I really liked the early morning ride through the Mohave Desert. I would not have wanted to face this in the 1930s during a summer day!

By the time I got to the San Bernardino Valley the traffic was noticeably heavier. I decided to bypass urban Route 66 route through the LA area, and try out the Angeles Crest Highway. This was great. Think of Deals Gap on steroids for 73 miles! The scenic views add much to the experience. At the western part I noticed an increase in high-dollar sport cars, some of which were pretending to be racers. Then, as I rounded a bend the traffic was stopped where the California Highway Patrol was cleaning up an accident. One of the high-dollar sport cars with severe front-end damage was against a cliff wall. It appeared the pile of rubble in the other lane was what was left of a motorcycle. Once again, don't forget to take your "A" game!

Reaching the Santa Monica Pier was somewhat of a letdown due to the high traffic and road construction. However, a good thing about taking Route 66 to the Pacific Coast is that it allows one to wing it on the way home.

If anyone is interested in reviewing, or borrowing, the Route 66 information I mentioned, just contact me.

Return from Route 66 to the West Coast As I planned this trip I thought I would ride to the west coast and turn north on the Pacific Coast Highway and ride to San Francisco, where I would stop and visit with another old friend from the days of working in South Korea. So I started north on CA-1. I had also believed that traveling during the first half of May the traffic and congestion would be minimal. I was wrong. All along this route traffic was heavy, and often it was hard to find a spot on pull-outs to enjoy the scenery. The weather was cool/cold with constant clouds and very light fog/mist blowing in from off-shore; it did nothing to brighten my outlook. When moving, CA-1 is scenic and good ride for motorcycles. But after a day and a half, I wanted a change. My California map showed Henry W. Coe State Park northeast of Monterey, and I headed there.

This park was one of the highlights of California. First, the campground was located at the end of a narrow, winding road that snaked through 14 miles of huge rounded hills. The view from the top was magnificent, and absolutely no vehicle noise during the night made this the best campground of the trip. About daybreak the local alarm sounded; it was a couple of tom turkeys gobbling. I broke camp as the bright sun lit up the tops of the hills, with cloud cover over the valleys below the hill tops. I cannot recommend this stop enough!

Back in the cloud layer, I prepared to join the natives in battling the freeway traffic to Concord, just east of San Francisco. Let me say this about the California freeway traffic and drivers: the traffic is heavy, but the drivers are much nicer than most other locations. I found most California drivers did not tailgate, and would allow ample room for lane changes, a welcome relief for an out-of-towner who is not really sure of the correct route! Arriving in Concord I spent a pleasant afternoon visiting with my friend and his wife.

I decided to travel during May to avoid the hot summertime temperatures in the deserts, and to be available to take the grandkids camping (RV style) in early June. This was a great time in the lower elevations, as the desert was blooming. However, if the trip also includes mountains, this could be a problem. My plans to head east through Tioga Pass just

north of Yosemite National Park started my major re-routing—the road was still closed. So, I headed northeast to pick up US-50, enjoying the scenic CA-49 on the way. US-50 is also very scenic as it picks its way through the Sierra Nevada mountains and past Lake Tahoe.

US-50 is called The Loneliest Road in the US through Nevada, so of course I had to ride it. The route is generally flat and straight, but also contains enough ups, downs, and arounds as it crosses several lower mountain ranges to make it a decent motorcycle road. The scenery was nice everywhere, with the road traversing through flowering high desert with snow covered mountain peaks in the background. I was somewhat disappointed in the lonely aspect though, as I met quite a few other vehicles. From Ely, Nevada, I headed south on US-93 and rode over to Cedar City, Utah. All-in-all, it was a good high desert ride through Nevada.

As I approached Utah, I reevaluated by route planning. My G650GS originally came with Metzler Tourance tires, which lasted for over 14,000 miles. To obtain better off-pavement performance I switched to Heidenau K60 tires. Prior to leaving, I thought that the Heidenau tires should be good for my 6200 mile trip. I was wrong. The rear tire was practically bald as I entered Utah. The bald rear tire, and the fact that a lot of high altitude areas were not open for the summer yet, led me to skip Zion National Park and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Note to self: next time start with new tires.

I headed out of Cedar City on UT-14, a scenic highway leading to Cedar Breaks National Monument. I was not surprised that Cedar Breaks was still closed by snow. Anyway, almost any road in southern Utah is a good motorcycle road and I enjoyed UT-14. I then went north on US-69 to the western end of UT-12.

I cannot say enough about UT-12 being a great bike road. The western end starts with Red Canyon, an almost unreal complex weathering of solid red rock. UT-12 is worth riding through Kansas and eastern Colorado because it passes Bryce Canyon National Park and provides constant scenic views. The twists, turns, and elevation changes of the 2-lane road make it a perfect motorcycle route. Toward the east end the road winds along a knife-edge with a large drop off on each side of the road. The gusty afternoon cross-winds made this section more interesting. If you go west, don't miss UT-12.

At Torrey, Utah at the eastern end of UT-12 I picked up UT-24, rode through Capital Reef National Park to UT-96, and south to cross the Colorado River at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and east over to US-191. All of the various rock formations made this a beautiful ride. Because of my rear tire I skipped the ride to Four-Corners and rode directly to Cortez, Colorado and nearby Mesa Verde National Park. This park is another highlight of the trip. Well worth it. Great bike roads and views!

My original plan was to zig-zag north-south through the southern Colorado mountains. However, having breakfast in Cortez I caught the local weather forecast. The fact that snow in the mountains was mentioned was bad enough. The fact that the amount was described in terms of feet really got my attention! I decided to take the fastest route to lower elevation in eastern Colorado, US-160.

US-160 is also scenic. This would be good motorhome road as well. Light drizzle started just before Durango and continued on and off for the rest of the day. The rain stopped as I approached 10,850 foot Wolf Creek Pass but it turned to snow. Throughout the day I could see that the mountains were getting the worst of it. I finally made it Walsenburg, where I had hoped that I would ride out of the rain. Instead, the drizzle turned to light rain.

I took CO-10 east from Walsenburg to La Junta. I think this road should be the Loneliest Road in America! In La Junta I treated myself to a nice motel room and warmed up in the hot tub.

The next day I was ready to tackle Kansas via US-50, where I hoped it would be dryer. I was lucky in that the really bad weather (tornadoes) hit the Great Plains the week before I left, and again the week after I got back. All I got was rain. In Garden City, Kansas I called my wife and she told me that the rain was covering almost all of southern Kansas but appeared to be clear farther north. Also, she had located a new rear tire at Engle Motors in Kansas City where I bought the G650GS.

So, I angled north toward Great Bend, Kansas, got out of the rain (finally) and spent the night in Emporia, Kansas (I had lived there for a while when working). The next day I arrived at Engle Motors 2-minutes after it opened, and they immediately replaced the rear tire. About 90 minutes later I was ready to head home (I really did, and still do, like those Engle folks!).

Highways US-50 west of Jefferson City and MO-94 east of Jefferson City made a far better ride than beating down I-70. All-in-all, a really good trip! **GR**