

March 2012

NEW JERSEY SHORE BMW RIDERS Inc

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"Beware the ides of March." *William Shakespeare*

"February makes a bridge and march breaks it."
George Herbert

"Autumn to winter, winter into spring, spring into summer, summer into fall,-- So rolls the changing year, and so we change; Motion so swift, we know not that we move." *Dinah Maria Mulock (used pseudonym Mrs. Craik)*

"My mother went into the Peace Corps when she was sixty-eight. My one sister is a motorcycle freak, my other sister is a Holy Roller evangelist and my brother is running for president. I'm the only sane one in the family." *Billy Carter*

"Male menopause is a lot more fun than female menopause. With female menopause you gain weight and get hot flashes. Male menopause you get to date young girls and drive motorcycles." *John Wayne*

"I admit to wasting my life messing around with fast cars and motorcycles." *Brock Yates*

"If they give you ruled paper, write the other way."
Juan Ramon Jiminez

President's Message

Hi All,

I find it hard to believe that the month of February is over and the weather has been above 40 degrees for most of the month. I hope that all of you, Polar Bears, have gotten your fill of February riding. March promises to come in like a lion and out like a

BMW Club
New Jersey Shore Riders



lamb. March 11 starts day light savings time and you know what that means, spring ahead and an hour more of riding. Shortly after that, we all get a touch of the green and of course spring begins later in the month.

Now is the time to think of any repairs to your bike that you might have been putting off and get it in to your favorite repair shop. While your bike is getting a tune-up pull out the maps and plan an interesting ride for your fellow riders.

Ride safe. Kenton

Email to the Editor

Imagine my surprise that someone actually read last month's rant! Imagine my even greater surprise that TWO people had read and commented on it.

Amazing!

From Rev. Mike Lamberti:

Don,

Excellent write up on the BMW's strong-arm tactics. Well said and very sad to hear about those two marketing fellas. I think we should send a letter from the club to the BMW president in charge of the motorcycle group and express how we feel as a club. I hope that BMWMOA will take a stand as well. Either way, I'm glad we have it in our newsletter.

Interestingly enough – the guy in charge of BMW-Motorrad US (Pieter de Waal) just reached the BMW mandatory management retirement age of 60, and this month there will be a new dude in charge. Unfortunately the new dude has an equally Germanic name.

More details in a press release in this newsletter issue.

From the missing and missed Tom (Dr. Viagra) Spader:

Don -

Even though I'm not actively involved with the club at this time, I still follow events of the 'werks'...be it management opins, products, announcements and of course our rag. The latter masterfully edited by yourself.

I agree 100% w/ your page one comments! Even though I 'love to complain at times about over-engineering' e.g. pulling the RT apart for 45 minutes to find the battery...I love both of my bikes...'98 RT and '03 LT. Great stuff.

The part I hate (relative term) of the BMW experience is the seemingly backward European thought process/culture of the management group. At times I feel their blood was removed and replaced by authentic high priced BMW fluids.

Get over it boys, it's only a nameplate!!!

Wished I had a chance to vote on the logo...too much FLA I guess...cause I would've said no to the change, disassociation with factory if that's the only alternate and advised the dictators to go 'shit in your hats'.

Anyway, loved your comments and share the feelings. Cheers, Tom

PS: Almost made it to last week's meeting but grandson was in the high school wrestling district playoffs. Maybe sometime in the near future. Also, was in SWFL (Naples area) where the RT has 'lived' for the past 3+ years and put on about 1k smile in bit less than two weeks. Love that bike although it may be heading up the Blue Ridge Mtns to Mikey's soon for some needed maintenance before returning to SWFL, the Battery Tender and the semi-retired life.

Thanks for the kind comments Tom. I'm hoping the new guy in charge "gets it" about the difference between company sponsored/run clubs in Europe, and the enthusiast clubs in the USA. My WAG is he won't, but we can hope.

Movie Night at Crown, Feb 15th

Mike Lamberti

Guys, for those of you that missed Movie Night at Crown Engineering in Howell you missed viewing an

excellent film on Robert Fulton ("*Twice Upon a Caravan*" based on his book "*One Man Caravan*".)

As a motorcyclist Fulton has no equal. He is one of those special few whose worldly contributions are not only important but also memorable. He lived the life many dream of in a time when borders were just signs and adventure was the call.

I want to thank Roger and Don for making the effort in bringing the film, projector, audio components and enough wires to tie up all of Mike Koval's stuff in his shop from the rafters! (That would be a divine moment!) All kidding aside, Harold G. offered a screen as well, thank you.

By the way, the ultra-buttered popcorn came with a coupon for cardiac surgery care of Doc Tom Rizzo who could not come because he was busy working out at the gym staying nice and healthy while we woofed down a few slices of fatty pizza an guzzled some chemical laden drink.

After the Fulton film we were watching "On Any Sunday" when I came to realize how much our society and motorcycling has changed in just a short time. Keep your shirts on, right Roger? (Its an inside joke, I'll explain at our next meeting). All in all we had a great time, the film is too good not to see it again or for the first time so I will see if we can have another viewing during the summer.

Thank you all for coming, Rev'n. Mike

Editor's Note: On-Any-Sunday was what got me into motorcycling in the early 1970's. Saw it (at the movies IIRC), looked for a Hodaka dealer in the phone book, bought a bike within a week, and that started a 40+ year adventure. There was also a book that went along with it – anyone know the name? (I think I still have it – but my office is packed up for painting.) It featured a Hodaka on the cover and was all about off-road/dirty-bike riding.

Book Swap

Last month's "Book Swap" at the meeting went well, and I'd suggest people continue bringing motorcycle related books and magazines they're done with to the meetings. It's a fun form of re-cycling, plus many of the books we have are no longer available, making it even more fun!

Guest Speaker March Madness Meeting!

Don Eilenberger

We're being honored by the attendance at our March meeting of wildly popular motorcycle-commentator/humorist/columnist Jack Riepe.

As many people have come to learn – Jack's rapier sharp wit holds no bars when it comes to targets. I'm going to be passing him notes on various club members which he might use during his talk to the club!

Bring one, bring all – it's going to be a club meeting to remember, and if you miss the meeting you can expect me to report on what Jack said about you in next month's newsletter!

BMW-Motorrad USA Management Changes

BMW Motorrad has reported some executive personnel changes in its USA sales branch, the Bavarian motorcycle manufacturer appointing Hans Blesse as Vice President.

Blesse, 51, will take over the VP of Sales position on April 1, following three and a half years as BMW Motorrad Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

The man who previously held the VP of Sales position in the USA, Pieter de Waal, 60, has decided to retire after 18 years with BMW.

Hans Blesse began his BMW career in 1987 with BMW Canada, which was newly founded at that time. After holding various positions with BMW Canada, he moved to BMW Spain in 2005 where he was responsible for the Aftersales Division up until August 2008, BMW says.

BMW says in September 2008 his career took him to Munich, where he became Executive Vice President of BMW Motorrad Sales and Marketing. During the period in which he was responsible for worldwide motorcycle sales, his greatest achievement was BMW Motorrad's historic sales record in 2011.

Hans Blesse says: "The USA is currently the third largest sales market for BMW Motorrad and is a strategically important market for future growth. I look forward to this new challenge and

the opportunity of continuing to build on Pieter de Waal's success."

Hendrik von Kuenheim (General Director, BMW Motorrad) says: "Hans Blesse is the ideal successor to Pieter de Waal. Having been responsible for BMW Motorrad sales and marketing worldwide, he has gained a lot of experience in recent years which he will now be able to put to use in his new position.

"Our aim is to significantly increase motorcycle sales in the coming years and expansion of our market presence in the USA is crucial to our growth plans. I should like to thank Pieter de Waal most sincerely for all the work he has done to strengthen the position of BMW Motorrad in the USA and wish him all the very best for the future.

Moto-Safe - March

Calibrated Confidence – and How to Get More

*Roger Wiles
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Riding confidence. Is it important? Can too much, or too little, be a bad thing? How can I become more confident? Are confident riders always competent riders? Some thoughts about confidence:

Can you ride in a straight line, keeping the bike inside an imaginary 12" wide lane? Sure! How about if the lane were a stable, well-supported foot-wide board over a long bridge? Whoa! That's a different story. But what has really changed? The physical task is the same; keep the bike within a 12" wide lane. The rider's well-developed muscle-memories and motor-skills have proven to be up to the task; how about the rider's conscious mind? Well, the consequences of failure are different, but the only thing that has really changed is the rider's degree of confidence in his or her ability to perform. And, don't try this! Really!

So, confidence in our abilities is an important riding asset. But does each of us have an accurate understanding of our abilities? How about the abilities of those we ride with, those we ride near? Interestingly, according to the authors of "The Invisible Gorilla - And Other Ways Our Intuitions Deceive Us" (Charbis & Simons, www.-

theinvisiblegorilla.com), displayed confidence in others is often perceived by others as an honest signal of actual competence, often with sad outcomes. Charbis and Simons describe this as one of the Illusions of Confidence. So, should we evaluate other riders by how they actually perform, or by how they appear to us? We all want to ride with others who display competent riding skills, responsibility and good judgment – we don't want over-confident riders putting us at risk - but sometimes, we have to peel the onion a little to get an accurate understanding of our fellow riders. But now, let's focus on you, The Motorcyclist.

How accurate is your confidence in your own capabilities? "Gorilla's" extensive research finds that humans often have a tendency to overrate their capabilities, rather like Garrison Keillor's mythical Lake Wobegon, where; "All the women are strong, the men are good looking, and all the children are above average." Rider-training professionals often note this 'above-average' phenomenon among students and most often, among the least capable. Why?

Perhaps we, as humans, have a subconscious tendency to compare ourselves to those less capable than ourselves, while attributing our mistakes to factors beyond our control, and ignore evidence that contradicts our feelings. Charbis and Simons write of our 'love of confidence,' the human need to feel confident in our endeavors. Can this happen to you?

"Gorilla" quotes Charles Darwin in the segment; "Unskilled and Unaware of It:"

"...ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge." This can help us understand why, often, those who are the least skilled are the most likely to think better of themselves than they should. Riders with less skill are subject to disproportionately experiencing the Illusion of Confidence, and in our riding world, this can get us badly hurt – or worse. Charbis and Simons' exhaustive research seems to confirm this, summarizing; "The incompetent face two significant hurdles. First, they are below average in ability. Second, since they don't realize they are below average, they are unlikely to take steps to improve their ability." They then pose the question: "Would training incompetent people to be more skilled improve the own understanding of their own skill levels?" Good news: The answer is yes!

While riders with lesser capabilities tend to compare themselves to those below them on the skill hierarchy, as riders acquire greater skills, the tendency diminishes and sometimes even reverses; riders begin comparing themselves to those of greater skill, and subconsciously adjust their confidence in their own skills to a more realistic level. As humans, we often discover that the more we know about a subject, the more we begin to realize we don't know. What you and I, responsible motorcyclists, really need is that accurate understanding of our present skill levels; let's call it Calibrated Confidence

Interestingly, additional research ('Contemporary Attitudes Toward Motorcycle Riding Safety and Riding Risk Factors' Robert Rowe, Irwin Broh & Associates) finds a link between riders with high-mileage and riding experience, maturity, and financial and career success; folks like this seem to be more likely to have upwardly-displaced confidence in their riding abilities; in the current riding community, these demographics are pretty much the norm. Up until now, perhaps you've thought; "Not me! I know my own abilities." Perhaps. Probably. But it might be worth some reflective thought.

Another useful way to think of the subject comes from the MSF's Advanced RiderCourse; they call it Risk Offset. It's the difference between a rider's skill-level and his or her risk-acceptance level, and how it may be mis-calibrated. Give that some thought.

Once we become aware of the Illusions of Confidence, we can better understand what confidence really means to us. Sure, we love to be self-confident in whatever we do. For good reason, because confidence helps us perform better. Occasionally, when we find that we've allowed ourselves to get into a tough situation, it's our deep, well-reasoned and experienced understanding – we assume it is accurate - of our capabilities, willfully and consciously applied, that makes the final difference – "I can do this; I've done it well before. I'll do it well this time, too. I know how to do this; I don't intend to fail." Is this just a psychological parlor trick we can play on ourselves, the 'fake it until you can make it' advice of some self-help books? Or, can this consciously positive mindset make a difference? Of course, this assumes the rider does have that critical and accurate understanding of his or her present skill levels – calibrated confidence.

Remember the imaginary fellow about to ride over the foot-wide bridge? He's shown, for tens of thousands of miles and more, that he can steer the machine within the narrow parameters, but how do you think his muscle-memories and motor-skills, his programmed movements that are well-established through training, purposeful practice and long experience, will operate if the rider loses a substantial degree of self-confidence in his ability to competently traverse the board over the broken bridge? How would YOUR muscles probably respond? Would you even make the attempt? Why? Why not? Please don't.

So, we can understand that mis-calibrated over-confidence can be a risk-factor; these riders can, and too frequently do allow themselves into situations that are above their proven skill level – negative Risk Offset - and that can hurt. But calibrated confidence is a critical asset.

Science helps us understand more about the mind-body connection. Let's call the part of the brain that operates the muscles the Muscle Operations Bureau; it's located on the Subconscious Floor of the Brain Building. Much, but not all, of our muscle-movements occur without much or any conscious thought; of course, Central Command, the conscious, thinking part of the brain on the top floor of the Brain Building, can and sometimes does actively and consciously direct the muscle operations – overriding the MOB's normal programs - particularly when learning a new physical skill, or when a difficult situation arises – like the foot-wide bridge. If Central Command has a strong sense of self-confidence, the muscles generally work far better, respond precisely, softly and smoothly, than they will if Central Command suddenly thinks, "Whoa! This looks really bad! I don't know if I can do this! But, Mister or Ms. Rider, you HAVE done it before, for thousands of miles! What's the problem? It's a Crisis of Confidence.

Now we can see that UNDER-confidence is also a risk-factor, as well as over-confidence. Under-confidence can prevent us from performing up to our proven abilities, and over-confidence can lead a rider to get into situations that are over the rider's head. What is critically needed is that accurate understanding of our present skill level - that calibrated confidence. How can we gain increased and well-calibrated confidence?

Well, purposeful practice seems to be a really good prescription. It might be self-directed purposeful practice while riding, repetitively performing a technique, evaluating the intrinsic feedback, and refining the technique on next rep. Of course, purposeful practice must also be correct practice; else the rider gets really good at riding badly. Here's another avenue.

Professional training. Be it a RiderCourse, training course, training tour, track-school or private instruction, you will perform your skills in front of a trained instructor or coach who will objectively identify and help you correct the bad, and refine the good – and help you achieve that critical accurate understanding of where you are, right now, in your progressive development – help you calibrate your confidence.

Keith Code's California Superbike School Training: Noted author and track-school operator, the venerable Keith Code, will be bringing a unique rider education and training opportunity to Bloomsburg. Courses will be offered on Friday and Saturday, July 23-24. For scheduling, course information and registration, contact: (323) 224-2734 www.superbikeschool.com.

RiderCourses from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation: In addition to the well-known entry-level Basic RiderCourse, the MSF offers Sponsors and Programs curricula that includes an intermediate Experienced RiderCourse (now referred to as BRC2), The Advanced RiderCourse, RiderCourses that focus on Trikes and Scooters, and new and challenging police-style tight maneuvering. Check www.msf-use.org for more information.

Stayin' Safe LLC Mini Tours: Using one-way radio coaching in real time, on public highways, riders learn how to read the road, creatively predicting risks and hazards both seen and unseen. Students will also practice intermediate and more advanced physical riding techniques, such as trail-braking, overlapping brake-and-throttle, and aggressive braking. To register, contact Stayin' Safe at: (724) 771-2269 www.stayin-safe.com.

Total Control Advanced Riding Clinic: Students progressively learn, practice and discuss the finer points of competent cornering and maneuvering at higher speeds. The unique curriculum helps riders reset their personal 'Tilt-O-Meter' to produce greater calibrated confidence

in both abilities of the motorcycle and rider. Total Control discusses the principle that knowledge can displace fear, and offers practical guidance. www.totalcontroltraining.com.

RawHyde Off-Pavement Training: Riders of Adventure Touring bikes will learn the finer points needed to safely and confidently maneuver these heavy but extremely competent machines over a variety of surfaces, such as dirt, sand, gravel, mud and much more. Your GS is up to the task; how about you? To register, contact www.rawhyde-offroad.com (661) 993-9942.

In addition to the opportunities mention above, check the Internet, as well as the Training Resources link on the home page of MotoSafe.

The Principle Centered Rider builds his or her riding strategies, tactics and techniques under the overriding principle of; "Ride my motorcycle, have lots of fun, and don't get hurt." Take the time and spend a few shekels to calibrate your personal confidence level, and improve your mental, visual and physical riding skills. And, get a copy of "The Invisible Gorilla - And Other Ways Our Intuitions Deceive Us." Check out the sidebar for exciting information. You'll become a better human being, as well as a better rider. Ride often, ride safe...think!

The Invisible Gorilla:

Daniel J. Simons



We all are amateur psychologists. We intuitively grasp the reasons for our own behavior and that of others. We have privileged access into the workings of our own minds. After all, who can know us better than we know ourselves? We see the world as it is, we know

what we know, and we know why we hold the beliefs we do. Or do we?

Imagine you are watching a video in which people are passing basketballs. Your task is just to count how many times the players wearing white jerseys pass the ball. Of course, you would notice if a person in a gorilla suit walked through the middle of the video, pausing in the center of the game to thump his chest at you, and casually strolled off the screen. Wouldn't you?

As it turns out, about 50% of people who watch this video don't see the gorilla at all! Yet, 90% of people are firmly convinced that they would.

That mismatch between what we see and what we think we will see is what we call "The Illusion of Attention." It is one of many ways that our intuitions about our own mind fail to live up to reality, and one of the illusions that can affect your motorcycling experiences.

This illusion is central to why car drivers so often turn left in front of oncoming motorcycles, failing to yield the right of way. We assume that as long as we keep our eyes on the road, if something important happens, we'll notice it. But, it's entirely possible to look right at something without seeing it, and unexpected objects and events often fail to capture our attention. In most places, motorcycles are less common on the road than are cars. Consequently, they are unexpected, and to a large extent, we see only what we expect to see.

Unfortunately, our daily experiences reinforce the intuition that we'll notice anything that matters — we only become aware of those things we happened to notice. If you missed the gorilla and I never asked you about it, you'd never know that you had missed anything. In fact, you can look right at the gorilla and still not see it. That's why drivers often claim to have looked in the direction of a motorcyclist before turning, yet still never saw them. And, it's why motorcyclists often claim that drivers made eye contact before failing to yield the right of way. Both are telling the truth, but both assume that looking is the same thing as seeing.

The illusion of attention affects riders too. Motorcyclists assume they will notice impending risks and hazards even if they are not looking for them. They can miss information that is plainly visible.

The illusion of attention is one of several examples of mistaken intuitions about our own minds. We have cognitive limitations that are a necessary byproduct of the way our minds work. For example, we need to be able to focus attention without being distracted, and that ability is a good thing. Our mistaken understanding of it is not. In "The Invisible Gorilla," Christopher Chabris and I discuss how our beliefs about what we see, think, and remember can mislead us in important ways. Throughout the book, we consider the implications of these everyday illusions for our well-being and safety.

Visit www.theinvisiblegorilla.com/charity.html for details.

Club Activity and Events Calendar - 2012

- ◆ **Regular Club Meetings** - 2nd Weds of the month at Schneiders. Meeting starts at 7PM, come earlier to eat.
- ◆ **Moribundi Lunchs** - for the old, infirm, retired, unemployed. It's a chance to get out of the house. 1st Weds of the month, 12:30PM at a restaurant to be decided by the chief Moribund Rd Swanson. Input for locations is gratefully accepted. Usual turnout is 10-12 old pharts.
- ◆ **March 7th** - Moribundi lunch at Harrigan's Pub – Sea Girt NJ.
- ◆ **March 11th** – Daylight Savings Time STARTS!
- ◆ **March 14th** - Regular Club Meeting.
- ◆ **March 21st** - ~~BMW Foundation Safety Class – subject still to be determined, location to be determined (probably Crown Engineering.)~~ CANCELLED – we've completed all the offered courses already!
- ◆ **April 4th** - Moribundi at TBA.
- ◆ **April 11th** - Regular Club Meeting.
- ◆ **April 13th-15th** - BMW-MOA mini-national at Gettysburg PA - more details to follow.
- ◆ **April 15th** - Gathering of the Nortons (rite of spring!) - Washington Crossing State Park, Washington Crossing PA.
- ◆ **April 18th** - Tech night at EPM - Klaus Hueneke's shop in Tenant NJ. 6PM to ??
- ◆ **May 2nd** - Moribundi at TBA.
- ◆ **May 6th** - Three Club Rumble, hosted by New Sweden. Parvin State Park in lovely(!) Pittsgrove NJ. Ride there will be organized (you can hardly get there from here.) We're looking into renting cabins there and making it a club overnight weekend.
- ◆ **May 9th** - Regular Club Meeting.
- ◆ **May 17th - 21st** - Morton's Spring Fling Rally, Natural Bridge VA. 2 days there, 2 days back, via great back roads. See Don for info.
- ◆ **May 19th - 20th** - Downeast Rally in Maine. Pre-registration strongly suggested (there are only so many lobsters..).
- ◆ **May 26th** - European Motorcycle Day - Maryland.
- ◆ **June 1st - 3rd** - Square Route Rally, Thurmont MD. Great rally. See Don for details. It will rain on this weekend. It always rains at SR (as long as Al Pierson shows up..)
- ◆ **Tuesday nights in June, July, August** - Ice Cream Runs. Locations to be announced. We need someone to take hold of this and make it theirs.
- ◆ **June 6th** - Moribundi Lunch at TBA.
- ◆ **June 13th** - Regular Meeting.
- ◆ **June 14th - 17th** - BMW-RA Rally at Copper Canyon, Colorado. Some thought is being given to a slow ride out, followed by a wander to California and back via interesting roads. See Don if interested. The ride would start on Sunday June 10th or Monday June 11th (depending on planning.)
- ◆ **June 23rd** - Club Picnic. Location to be determined.
- ◆ **July** - Tuesday night - Ice Cream Runs - continue. Locations TBA.
- ◆ **July 4th** - Moribundi lunch - location TBA.
- ◆ **July 11th** - Regular Club Meeting.
- ◆ **July 19th - 22nd** - BMW-MOA National Rally in Missouri. Roger T is organizing regis-

tration and expects club members to attend and help out. This will be the hottest weekend on record in Missouri.

◆ **August** - Tuesday nights - Ice Cream Runs continue. Locations TBA.

◆ **August 1st** - Moribundi Lunch - location TBA.

◆ **August 8th** - Regular Club Meeting.

◆ **Late August** - Club weekend ride to somewhere nice - perhaps Bennington NY or that general area.

◆ **August 31** - September 3rd - Finger Lakes Rally, Finger Lakes NY.

◆ **September 5th** - Moribundi lunch - location TBA.

◆ **September 12th** - Regular Club Meeting.

◆ **September 21st - 23rd** - Last Chance Rally, Elmer NJ. See Harold or Don for details. Support our brother club - New Sweden BMW Riders!

◆ **October 3rd** - Moribundi Lunch - Location TBA.

◆ **October 10th** - Regular Club Meeting - and nominations for officers for 2013.

◆ **Late October** - Colors in the Catskills - Hunter Mountain NY, date to be announced. Anyone interested in making a weekend of it let us know. Great time to visit the Catskills.

◆ **November 7th** - Moribundi Lunch - Location TBA.

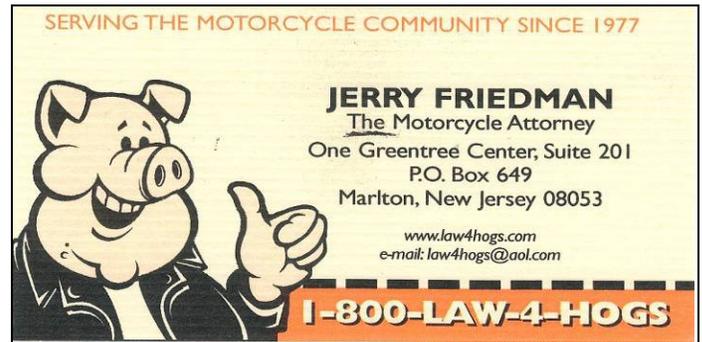
◆ **November 14th** - Regular Club Meeting - and annual officer election.

◆ **December 5th** - Moribundi Lunch - Location TBA.

◆ **December 12th** - Regular Club Meeting.

◆ **December sometime** - Annual Toy Run to Children's Specialized Hospital, Toms River, NJ.

◆ **December sometime** - Annual holiday party. Location and date TBA. RD Swanson is party captain.



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Club T-Shirt Delivery – MARCH Madness Meeting!

Mike Lamberti

For everyone who ordered/paid-for club T's – they will be delivered at the March meeting.

Solstice Solo

Warren Harhay (by permission)

Whatever your philosophical convictions may be, most folks will agree that a primal link binds our physical earthly environment to our inner self. For a few, a particular sensitivity to the duration of sunlight is more acute than others. This awareness or affliction, and affliction may be too strong a word, causes a reoccurring period of mild depression and physical unease creeping in about the end of October and bottoming out at year's end.

Science has determined that this Seasonal Affected Disorder (SAD) is caused by the reduced exposure to light due decreased daylight of late fall and early winter. Some aboriginal area of the brain stores on its chemical abacus the recognition of this diminished light and depresses production of naturally occurring endorphins. The result being a malaise, a reduced vitality experienced by those of us burdened with SAD.

The day in which daylight is shortest and night time longest is a divining of the decay of fall-winter and the promise of longer days with the future seasonal renewal yet to come. The winter solstice has now passed. It has triumphed over declining day and ever lengthening night. Now the period of daily sunshine is once again increasing. Imperceptible at first but by seconds, but soon minutes, than eventually whole hours. The ancients celebrated this watershed day.

They probably painted their faces, donned headdresses and other celebratory regalia then danced in mixed worship and wonderment.

I rode my motorcycle...

The sky is clear azure blue. A clearness unique to the dry desert sky. The air is brisk and has a sting about it. It's in the low forties in Boulder City Nevada. A place one mountain pass removed from the hustle and hustlers of Las Vegas just to the North. Not usually sharing exactly the same weather patterns and certainly not sharing the same air as its energetic northwest neighbor, the atmosphere here is still clean, free from churned silt of gamblers frenzy. We're only a mountain pass but yet a world away. I won't traverse Las Vegas to the northwest in the height of a million folks last minute frantic Christmas preparations. I know that the northerly routes will be particularly cold and blustery today, so, I'll go south.

I'll do the dam tour.

I gas up at Dales'. Funny thing, there is no Dale. It's a phony name to give "personality" and a feel of "hominess" to this convenience store/gas station. It has BOTH pay at the pump and the old fashioned non-EPA mandated vacuum hose shrouded gas nozzle. And so with the luxury of paying at the pump I leave my helmet on. Surely that contributes to my air of mysteriousness as seen by the van full of kids at the next gas island over. Here's this big guy, clad in black leather pants, matching jacket, knee high black leather boots and black full face helmet standing next to a large powerful motorcycle. My upraised faceplate reveals only piercing brown eyes peering directly back at the minivan. A brave little boy of perhaps sevenish, sheepishly waves. I return his wave, my big grin beneath the Arai's chin bar unrevealed to him.

The refueling process complete, I'm on my way. First at a modest 55mph then to 70mph. The posted limit here is 75 and since this road is heavily patrolled I observe the limit with a grudging respect. Now free from proximity to other vehicles the first rush of relief begins to clear a head fogged and clogged with the previous weeks tensions.

Others have referred to this brain cleansing to

be the work of a mythical drug called motorcyclene. Like the endorphins naturally generated within the brain, this ephemeral elixir is only emitted while being transported about on two wheels. For a lucky few, myself included, motorcyclene takes effect at mild speeds and under the most timid of road conditions. Elevated speeds and severe bank angles are not necessary to be flooded with its waves of euphoria. Others, more jaded, need more challenging conditions to get the same rush of motorcyclene. A few, even less lucky, must be astride a particular brand or style of two wheel transport to extract the effects of this mysterious position. Nevertheless, we all share that same thrill of recreation that it provides.

Thirty eight miles of road is quickly devoured. I find myself at the outskirts of the old mining town of Searchlight. The speed limit drops from 75 then to 55 and quickly to 45 as I pass a community church housed in a "double-wide" mobile home structure. Abandoned mine shafts and their attendant timber framing protrude from the hillsides as I breeze past decelerating to 35. Over the rise a flashing yellow beacon warns of the 25mph limit through the township, housing but a small casino and three gas stations.

The casino is the Searchlight Nugget, their "hook" is coffee for a dime. A friend whose family was in the Nevada gambling business BEFORE it was legal once told me that his dad sternly lectured that ALL casinos are toilets - they just flush differently. I pass the casino, a Nevada trooper pulls out from the station house midpoint in the town and proceeds north from where I just came. I wave. It couldn't hurt, I think as I idle though this town that looks just about like it did more than a half century ago.

My reverie is quickly interrupted and my heartbeat elevated as the rush of adrenaline is sent coursing through my bloodstream. A siren blasts 130 decibels from the Highway patrol car that I just waved to. A quick glance in the mirrors reveals that a not so poor soul in a new Cadillac STS is the intended target of this law enforcement attention and thankfully NOT ME! A grateful sigh accompanies the thought that perhaps that distraction of a 10 cent coffee overcame the warning of the flashing yellow "slow-down" beacon. If so, that will be a most expensive dime coffee for that the Caddy driver.

Over the hilltop the speed limit jumps back up and I resume my pace. To the left flashing strobe lights once blinked atop giant antenna tower arrays. Here was one of the many great anomalies to be found in the Mohave Desert, an abandoned Coast Guard facility in the midst of the most arid place on earth. It is the remains of the Searchlight Loran Transmitting station. A few more miles down the road and billboards seem to magically rise out of the desert floor hawking twenty-five dollar hotel rooms and three dollar buffets. I turn left toward that other southern Nevada boomtown, Laughlin. Here in mid-April tens of thousands Bad-boys, Fatboys and Knuckleheads will gather for their annual "Laughlin Run". There will be lots of motorcycles as well.

The state has widened this roadway to provide swift four lane transport to what not too long ago was once considered but a hell hole of heat along the Colorado. This same road was at one time was a holy terror to traverse with dips and curves, hills and swerves. In other words, a great bike road. That is unless you found yourself behind Ma and Pa in their Winnebago. Today traffic is efficiently and quickly transported through a number of mountain passes with wide banked sweepers but grades still challenging for oversize vehicles. Down the mountain-side to the valley carved by the Colorado River, wide vistas sweep to the north and the south and are picture book pretty.

Laughlin is not my destination today. I am on the dam tour. The first of two dams I will traverse today is Davis Dam. Built in 1944 to further control the Colorado rivers flow into Mexico, It is the southern terminus of Lake Mohave and controls the water flow for what is now known as Lake Havasu just to the south.

I cross over the Colorado river on a bridge that was "donated" to the two states by the riverfront casinos. I always marvel at the generosity of this great humanitarian act as I zoom across this great benevolent structure that bridges the cultures and populations of Nevada and Arizona. Truly, this is THE piece bridge.

A quick left at the first light in Arizona towards Kingman. A mildly steep incline through the familiar combination of granite, lava flows, iron

embedded sandstone, pure white limestone that all together make up the mountains and passes of this region. White, red, gray, black, purple all shift in hue and intensity depending upon the light of day. The short duration of which this ride now celebrates.

On the left side of the road, abandoned mine shafts are encircled by razor wire tipped cyclone fences. They add a hideous appearance to these mines hidden but very real danger. The temperature remains stable in the high forties, but the wind now is gusting vigorously. A steady lean is necessary to keep forward progress. The occasional gust requires even more banking action. I remember to watch for formations on the right which will quickly redirect a gust in the opposite direction requiring immediate reaction and reorientation. I increase my forward speed while trying to remember a long forgotten lecture on vector addition now suddenly is much more relevant than it was when first heard some fifty years ago.

I crest the ridge and proceed to descend into what is locally known as the "Golden Valley". Whatever the hell it is, the roads certainly aren't paved with it. Nor from the looks of the prevailing architecture that dominates the sparse landscape is it to be found in the hands of its inhabitants.

Kingman is an old railroad town that proudly claims Andy Devine as a favorite son and more recently doesn't wish to openly discuss the transient housing of Timothy McVeigh, one of the infamous Oklahoma City bombers. My first stop will be the Kingman Cycle motorcycle dealer. The stop more a way-point than destination.

After a complimentary coffee (a price even better than 10 cents back at the Nugget) and the necessary accompanying pit stop, I walk outside to prepare for the ride past dam two. Hoover Dam. As I mount up the mechanic comes out to talk about bikes in general. We share our thoughts about the effects of motorcyclene without ever mentioning its name directly. I don't know his name, nor he mine yet we converse like lost friends with similar history.

The ride to Hoover Dam will be directly northwest on US-93, directly into the wind. I have frequently traveled this route which is now all but

for a few miles near Kingman, a four lane divided highway. At US 93 just south of the Nevada border the rugged mountains and the remnants of ancient volcanic activity replace the benignly flat land of the desert found north of Kingman. A recent road project in Arizona has resulted in the complete repaving and refurbishment of the last 16 miles before and past Hoover Dam. The road near has a number of dedicated overpasses created solely for the cross traffic of wildlife safely over the now newly expanded highway. I wonder who was the lobbyist for the interests of the bighorn sheep herd in implementing this costly road plan.

Gentle sweepers combined with mild grades dominate the approach to the border and the newly constructed bridge now bypassing the dam completely to its south. Once steep descents with switchbacks through steep and ominous canyon walls were precursors to the impending dam crossing. Giant electric power lines still appear intertwined with the granite and volcanic tuff but now no longer can you see the dam from this new and very much improved roadway. In fact, without the new signage you would not even realize that you even are on a bridge many hundreds of feet above the river and the dam. The spectacular roadway view now exists solely as a memory.

Only by a taking a diversion through an dedicated exit can the grand sight of Lake Mead pushing against the white arch of concrete that is Hoover Dam be now seen. Below this new bridge, the vision of the two art deco intake towers rising out above the water while electric distribution lines and cables of various sorts fly off in all directions is but an old but vivid memory. It is now much more difficult and much less fulfilling to experience The Dam while on a motorcycle. No view, no switchbacks, no steep descents, no traffic, no danger, no fun.

Motoring over the dam bridge and then quickly past the Hacienda casino welcoming signs promising a ninety-nine cent shrimp cocktail we quickly glide into the Lake Mead Recreation Area. This is the park I love to ride in and through. My Park. It has sweeping vistas, gentle sweepers, roads marked with "Dangerous Curves Ahead", beautiful marinas, hot springs, and geologic formations to delight the even the most jaded. Soon I will revisit the park, but now

I've got to get the last couple of miles home up to the town that really does sit high upon a hill - Boulder City.

I take the long way home. The motorcycle way home. The route I seldom travel when I am in the car, but always take when I am on a bike and just want to get a wee bit more of that priceless motorcycle before garaging the bike.

This year's solstice trip wasn't very long, less than 200 miles. After all this is the shortest day of the year, not to be repeated for 365 days. Tomorrow the day will be a bit longer. Soon my rides will be further once again. I need no head-dress, just give me my helmet. I don't need a costume, just my leathers and boots, and I can't dance very well...but boy can I ride!

Have a safe and happy new year. May all your rides bring you lots of motorcycle.

NJMP Open House – March 11th Free!

MILLVILLE, NJ – February 27, 2012 – New Jersey Motorsports Park (NJMP) is hosting an Open House titled "Come Experience New Jersey Motorsports Park" on Sunday, March 11, 2012 from Noon to 9 p.m. and will feature free admission, free go-karting, free car, cycle and bike laps... just to name a few!

"We've been working hard all winter long in preparing the Park for the 2012 season," stated Brad Scott, General Manager, NJ. "We're so excited to get things moving we've decided an event open to everyone is the perfect kick-off for the year. Be sure to bring your friends and family" added Scott.

The day's line up includes:

- Free admission - Free go-karting - Free car, cycle and bike track laps on Thunderbolt and Lightning - \$1 Food Menu presented by the Finish Line Pub - Monster Truck Rides - Grand Prize Drawing, starting at 6 p.m., for 2012 Karting Pass (\$1,200 value)- Event Ticket Give-A-Ways and more

For more information about NJMP call (856) 327-8000 or visit <http://www.njmp.com>

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MEETING – Weds – March 14th
Schneider's, Main St. Avon-by-the-Sea
Special Speaker – Jack Riepe - March Madness Meeting!

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