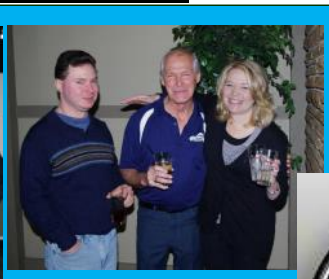
"CCN" BMWMOC's Quarterly Newsletter

BMW Club
Motorcycle Owners
of Cleveland

Cleveland Club News

Spring 2014



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From the Editors

Dominic and Kristin Cioffi

Happy Spring!

After a long, cold winter, we are getting anxious for warmer weather. Our motorcycle, Biatrix the GSA, was excited because she was able to go for a ride during last week's warm up. Hopefully our current cold spell won't last long, and Biatrix can get out of the garage more regularly.

Like many of you, our winter months have been spent dreaming of summer trips to come. Now that spring is upon us, it is time to start finalizing travel plans. Though the BMWMOA International Rally looks nice, we decided to attended this year's BMWRA National Rally at the Barber Motorsports Park. Our rough trip outline takes us down the Blue Ridge, through Tennessee to Nashville, a stretch on the Natchez Trace, and back roads into Birmingham. Now comes the difficult task of creating a concrete route and deciding on sights to see. We've heard a few club members are also planning on attending the rally, so it should be a fun trip.

With so many other great rallies and rides throughout the summer, we hope to be able to take some other trips, too. We always have a good time at MotoGP in Indianapolis. At night, the city closes a few of the downtown streets to allow motorcycles only, and it is fun to walk around and look at all the different bikes. Our club's Micro Rally, the 4 Winds BMW Rally, and the Finger Lakes Rally are always favorites as well.

We look forward to seeing everybody on the road,
Dominic and Kristin Cioffi

CCN 2014

The CCN will be published quarterly, at the beginning of each season. We welcome and encourage member submissions.

Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring CCN	**March 15**
Summer CCN	**June 15**
Fall CCN	**September 15**
Winter CCN	**December 15**

President's Message

Marcial Ingal

Grub zu jeder!

What a great start to the New Year!

To start the celebration of our 25th Anniversary, the club held our annual holiday party at Brennan's Party Center on January 11, 2014. It was special event commemorating the clubs first 25 years with limited edition anniversary club patches. There was a special presentation to honor earlier founding members including Karl with a "K" Hoffman. It was good food, good friends, good drink, good music and an overall good time had by all. Congratulations to all the award winners, in particular the reigning MoCal champ Jim Sedivy, who sneaked up on both Pat Corrigan and myself, who took 2nd and 3rd place respectively. Best of luck to everyone again this season.

On Saturday, February 1st we had our annual breakfast get together at Gene's Place before the International Motorcycle show at the IX Center. The breakfast was delish as usual. The show was once again attended by our favorite motorcycle make… BMW, for the 2nd year in row. BMW showcased their new water cooled line up and new models. If you missed it I'm sure the local area BMW dealerships will be happy to show you what they have to offer.

On Sunday, February 23rd, the club had our inaugural ski outing held at Peek n' Peak resort in Western NY. We had handful of brave souls journey the trip. The weather cooperated and the conditions were just right. We look to hold other new events this season so be on the lookout for more details to follow.

On Saturday, March 15th, the club took to the lanes in Fairview for the annual Rock n'Bowl. This year we had six lanes of keglers aiming strikes and spares, while avoiding gutter balls. It appeared to be a rock'n good time had by all. This event has grown in the past couple of years, and we look to carry that momentum onto to all the upcoming events throughout the year.

I would like to finally mention that we have had a nice little surge in membership since the beginning of the year. Many of these folks have already attended club events and membership meetings. I'm happy to see our newest members come out a join us in all the fun. I always look forward to seeing all members of old and new at the events.

The dawn of a new riding season is finally upon us. The future of our club looks bright and the year is shaping up to be another fun filled calendar of events. Hope to see you next time and as always safe riding.

Best regards,

Marcial Ingal
President

The BMWMOC is Chartered Club #196 with both the BMWMOA and the BMWRA national organizations. The BMWMOC is a Not-For-Profit Corporation of the Great State of Ohio consisting of about 145 riding enthusiasts mostly in the Northeast Ohio Area. The Club is an active group with a common interest in BMW Motorcycles and the people who ride them.

Calendar of Events

Visit the calendar on www.bmwmoc.org for an updated list of events

Directors' Meeting
March 27, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Harry Buffalo
8560 Detroit Ave., Lakewood

Membership Meeting w/ guest speaker Amy Jean Nichols
April 3, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Panini's
32800 Detroit Ave., Westlake

AMA/Iron Pony Ride
April 26, 2014
Details TBA

Membership Meeting
May 1, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Strawberry Lane, North Chagrin Reservation

Spring Tune-up Clinic
May 3, 2014
9:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m.
Cobb's HD Repair
1301 Brownell Ave., Lorain

Group Riding Safety Lecture & Bike Show
May 10, 2014
10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.
National Packard Museum

European Rider's Rally
May 16-18, 2014
Burkesville, KY

Directors' Meeting
May 22, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Location TBA

41st Annual BMWRA National Rally
May 29– June 1, 2014
Barber Motorsports Park & Museum
Birmingham, AL

Membership Meeting
June 5, 2014
Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation

Spring Micro Rally & Campout
June 13-15, 2014
Wildlife Adventure Club, Brinkhaven

Laurel Highlands BMW Riders Campout
June 13-15, 2014
Pioneer Park Campground
Somerset, PA

Cave Ride w/ Mickey Skowronsky
June 22, 2014
Details TBA

Membership Meeting & July 4th Celebration
July 4, 2014
Joe and Gail Conway's Home, Lorain

AMA Vintage Days
July 11-13, 2014
Mid-Ohio Sports Course
Lexington

Club Ride to Mid-Ohio Super Bike Races
July 20, 2014
Leave Bob Evans @ 8:00 a.m.
17011 Bagley Rd., Middleburg Hts

42nd BMW MOA International Rally
July 24-27, 2014
Minnesota State Fairgrounds
St. Paul, MN

Directors' Meeting
July 31, 2014
Marcial Ingal's Home, Rocky River

Additional activities TBA

Amy Jean Nichols aka "WindBlownAmy"

Be sure to join us at our regular monthly meeting on **April 3** at Panini's Westlake. Our guest speaker will be Amy Jean Nichols. "WindBlownAmy", as she calls herself, is a BMW motorcycle riding local artist who travels to art shows around the country, selling her handmade jewelry, glass beads, copper and porcelain enamels. She also does pencil and ink drawings of BMW motorcycles. Amy will share some stories of her travels and samples of her artwork. Amy used to attend some of our meetings and she is known to several club members since she has lived her most of her life in the area and has been riding BMW's for over 25 years.

Amy is featured in an article in the April 2014 issue of Rider Magazine. You can read about her there or at her website, rigadoonglass.com. Don't miss this opportunity to meet a fellow rider and local artist.

2014 National Rallies

The BMW Riders Association is pleased to announce the 2014 RA Rally will be held at Barber Motorsports Museum and Park, **May 29th thru June 1st, 2014**. It will be a 4 day event, beginning on Thursday with teardown on Sunday morning, June 1st. You can now pre-register online for this rally!

If you've never been to the Barber, you will be amazed. The Barber Motorsports Park is a 740 acres multi-purpose racing facility located on the eastern fringes of Birmingham, Alabama, USA near Leeds. It was built by George Barber, and includes the Barber Vintage Motorsport Museum. Home to the world's best motorcycle collection, the museum now has over 1200 vintage and modern motorcycles and racecars and the largest collection of Lotus cars as well as other significant makes. The collection is the largest of its kind in the world. There are approximately 600 of the 1200 motorcycles on display at any given time. These bikes range from 1902 to current-year production. The common street bikes represented, as well as rare one-off Gran Prix race machinery.

You're all invited to enjoy "Rollin' by the River." Roll on in to Minnesota's capital city, and visit St. Paul. The 42nd BMW MOA International rally will be held **July 24 –27, 2014** at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds.

Minnesota is best known as the Land of 10,000 Lakes, but is also known for one superior lake and a great river. If you're joining us from any direction, the Lake Superior Circle Tour is a ride not to be missed. Visit Aerostich on the way to or from, or meander along the "Mighty Mississippi" and join in the Great River Challenge (more to follow).

The Minnesota State Fairgrounds roads are all paved, and there's plenty of shade and grassy camping areas. As always, we will have music, seminars, good food, plenty of vendors, and oh, yes….beer. St Paul is the home of Summit Brewery, and who knows, we may even have a "beer bus tour" to chauffeur you around to some local micro-breweries. As always, RPU courses will be offered on site, as well as some GS Giants activities, Camp Gears and more.

Top Ten MOCal Awards, 2013

#1 Trophy	Jim Sedivy
#2 Trophy	Pat Corrigan
#3 Trophy	Marcial Ingal
#4	Paul Koontz
#5	Mickey Skowronsky
#6	Joe Conway
#7	Diane Koontz
#8	Phil Nerandzic
#9	George Lopez
#10	Roger Pivonka

BMWMOC GRAND TOUR 2014

The MOCal, short for "motorcycle decal", program as sponsored by the BMW Motorcycle Owners of Cleveland will continue each new year with new targets.

This year's targets: Public Swimming Pools

Turn in a picture of yourself or your motorcycle in front a public swimming pool in any state. Be sure your bike and the pool are clear in the picture. Points are awarded as indicated. Submit your pictures to the MOCal administrator, Don Poremski. If you submit a group shot, please be sure to turn in the names of all persons in the photo.

Helpful hints:

Public means water for swimming that is open to the general public. Backyard pools do not qualify. Wear your bikini or speedo for bonus points!!

2014 MOCAL POINTS AWARD CHART

Activity	Description	Points
BMWMOC GRAND TOUR 2014	Picture of yourself and/or your bike in front of an Ohio public swimming pool. (w/swimsuit add 2 pts.)	3
	Wear a bikini in the photo.	5
	Wear a speedo in the photo.	7
Residence Meeting	Hold monthly meeting at your home	15
Arrange Monthly Meeting	Contact restaurant/bar	5
Attend Monthly Meeting	Show up, sign attendance sheet	5
Ride to Monthly Meeting	Attend after arriving on two wheels	1
Bring Guest to a Meeting	Bring guest, sign attendance sheet	1
Meeting Activity	Conduct 50/50 or raffle	1
Board Meeting	Hold board meeting your home	5
Rally Chairperson	Micro Rally & Fall Festival	25
Rally Task Leader	Perform rally task to assist chair	5
Rally Task Volunteer	Help out as required at rally	2
Board Member	President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Directors,	10
Road Captain	Take on club ride and function responsibilities	25
Newsletter Editor	Create quarterly newsletter	25
Story/Report for CCN	Submit story for newsletter	3
Ride* Leader	Lead rides from breakfast or rallies	3
Ride* Leader Bonus	Lead more than 3 bikes, report names	2
Ride* Participant	Ride with leader of above	1
Ride Participant Bonus	Attend ride with 3 or more bikes	1
Large Group Bonuses	More than 5 bikes More than 8 bikes	2 4
Breakfast Only	Attend breakfast, no ride	1
Club Committee Head	Membership, Ads, Country Store, Door Prizes	10
Banner/Bandana Photo	Submit photo of group attending a motorcycle function – rally, group ride and displaying club banner or club neckerchief	3
Webmeister	Maintain club web site	25
New Member Sponsor	Sponsor new member who joins	5
New Member Bonus	Join club	5
Board Awards	Points awarded to outstanding Members as voted at November Board Meeting	10
NEW Name Tag Displayed	Wear your name tag at a club event	1

* A "Club Ride" is defined as at least two club members AND two motorcycles.

To Oregon and Back Again: A Bikers tale

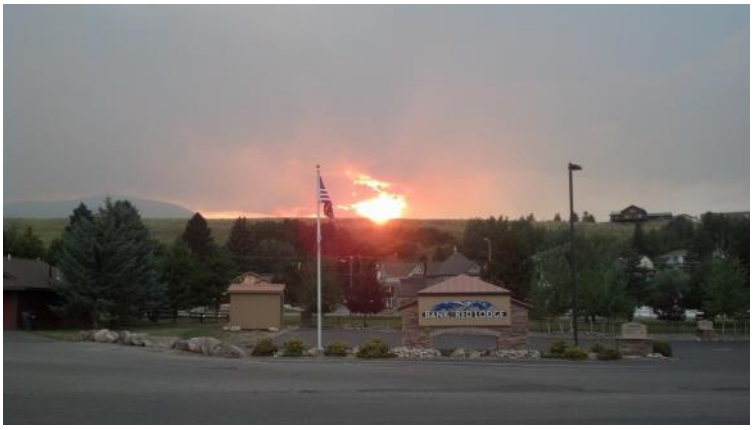
Mike and Gretchen Nahus

We left for the Curve Cowboy Reunion **August 19**. This year's event was to be in Bend, Oregon. The host hotel was the Riverhouse Resort along the beautiful Deschutes River. This years Children's charity was the Sparrow Clubs for Bend. We raised $20,000 and had a great time.

Our trip began early **August 19** on the way to Columbus. Black Beauty, our 2003 LT, was over loaded with gear. The weather was cold and gray. Usually it's raining in Ohio when we leave on trip ensuring the rest of the trip will be good weather. Ohio said goodbye and didn't disappoint us and we had a little rain. Once we left Ohio we had good weather into Bloomington, Illinois.

Anxious to get out west we departed early on a bright clear morning **August 20**. You could tell it was going to be a good riding day. It was just about perfect Sunny and in the 70s and by noon it was 80 degrees when we stopped for lunch at a Loves gas stop. We stopped at Sioux City for the night.

Onward to Spearfish SD **August 21**. Dark skies this morning as we raced north to Souix Falls. We beat the storm front there and turned west across SD. We had a 1 minute shower 10 miles east of our gas stop in Mitchell where we met other friendly bikers heading to Deadwood. Weather turned nice for our sprint to Murdo. I even managed to miss Tom the turtle running for his life across the highway. We had lunch at the diner in Murdo. Thank you Lord for the good weather. There is a great car and old stuff museum in Murdo. Go there!



Next stop Red Lodge Montana, **August 22**. We were going to ride the Bear Tooth pass from Cody, one of the favorite roads we like, but the wild fires had closed down the road. Instead we took I90 through Billings and Laurel MT and came down to Red Lodge from the North. The hotel greeted us with a sign in the lobby that the pass just reopened. I let John and Jean know, as they were now only a half day behind us and catching up, they could ride it in the morning. We did get to see the fire fighting helicopters with the buckets hanging below as they going to and from the fire. They were using the Red Lodge airport. The hotel let us use the garden hose and rags to clean the dust off Black Beauty and we then walked downtown for a bison burger and beer.

The next day, **August 23**, we planned to meet up with John and Jean in Missoula and ride Lolo Pass with the next morning. We had a great ride in the morning on Route 78 out of Red Lodge then I90 west into Butte. Great roads beautiful weather awesome scenery- Could not ask for better.

We meet up with them for breakfast **August 24** but the web site said Lolo was closed. Unknown to us was while we had breakfast and made alternate plans the pass reopened. We road with them to Spokane Valley and had lunch with them and they went on to Spokane and we went south to Kennewick.

August 25 on the way to the Oregon coast we turned west on WA14 head across Washington. We were low on gas but certainly there had to be a gas station along the way some where. I saw a sign that said nest services 83 miles. What do you mean next services, I don't see any services around here. I consulted the GPS for the closest gas. There was a Shell station South and East 10 miles as the crow files. So back 10 miles and south 14 miles put us in Oregon. Filled up and being that far off course Betty says best path is now OR-30 along John Day's river. That was a better choice for scenery anyway. We did encounter rain for about 45 minuets but our gear and the bike kept us dry. We stopped at the Evergreen Aviation museum home of the Spruce Goose. It is a pretty cool place if you're into aviation. We arrived at Lincoln City on the coast and our Hotel was right across the street from the Ocean. We treated ourselves to dinner at an ocean side restaurant with a great view of the sunset.

Riding south along the cost on highway 101 **August 26** we spied some beautiful beaches and huge rocks sticking up out of the Ocean. We stopped at the Hatfield Marine Science center for a visit but we were too early and it wasn't open yet so we couldn't go inside but they had some cool stuff outdoors. RT 242 was open on the way inland to Bend so we finally get to take one of our planned routes. McKenzie Pass didn't disappoint with its curves, giant tree, hills and scenery. We met up with another couple of friends head into Bend at the McKenzie observatory and road the rest of the way with them and checked in at the River House our home base for a few days.

One of the really cool rides we took with John and Jean was to Crater Lake. We found some real non ethanol gas and got 55 mpg on that trip. It was a nice day but was cold and windy at the crater rim but it was a good ride.

We had a great time in Bend but time to say goodbye on **August 31**. We had great weather as we took US 20 east from Bend. Cool sunny blue skies. Then this afternoon going to twin falls it got up to 95 degrees. We took in the view of Snake River Canyon.

September 1 on to Cody where we spent the night. That town is pricey. Lots of stuff to do with the museum and shops and shows. We cut though Yellowstone and had lunch at Old Faithfull Inn on the way. I think I saw a Moose ducking behind some cover. It was huge and it was close to the road and I'm glad it moved away from the road instead of towards it.

Cody is a nice cowboy town. I wish we would have stayed an extra night so we could have spend the next day at the museum and shops. **September 2** we took 14/20 west to east through Greybull. The scenery was fabulous. Remember the scene where Gene Hackman tells Denzel Washington in Crimson tide "right here right now.. this is my favorite part". Wyoming 2 lane highway heading east into the sun in the morning. " Right here right" now I said to Gretchen Nahas over the intercom. We spent the night in Rapid City SD.

A little too anxious to get home traveling East on I90 **September 3,** we got stopped by the Highway patrol. Note to self... Never pass a SD state trooper when they are doing the speed limit. That is proof that you were speeding. Lucky I got just a warning. We endured his safety lecture and we stopped in Mitchell for an ice cream break.

This Fall's CCR will be in Chattanooga, Tennessee home of the Chattanooga Choo Choo. It's within spitting distance of Cleveland and I would recommend going. Search google for curve cowboy reunion for more information if interested. It would be cool if we could get good Ohio representation this year.

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Inside Track

Dominic Cioffi

The new 2014 R1200GSA and R1200RT's have landed on dealerships floors. The new bikes in many ways have great advancements compared to previous generation boxers. Maintaining the water cooled boxers will cost its pilots less than the previous generation camheads. The new bikes only have one spark plug per cylinder, as opposed to two with the camhead models. The valve intervals are twice as long; 6,000 miles for the camhead, 12,000 miles for the water cooled. The dreaded throttle body sync is completely omitted on the new series that uses drive by wire technology instead of the bowden cables that stretch and wear unevenly. Transmission oil changes are also a thing of the past on the new bikes. The new water boxers have a wet clutch that is bathed in engine oil. The new fuel pumps are more resistant to ethanol gasoline.

The new bikes performance is far greater than any former boxer. Horse power is now rated at 125 and torque is at an all-time high of around 90 foot pounds. The suspension is now manufactured by Sachs and is semi active, thanks in part to the drive by wire technology. Servicing the forward wet clutch will certainly be preferable than breaking your bike into two pieces. An analogy would be and endoscopy vs a colonoscopy.

I am asked on a daily basis when I am going to trade in my antiquated 2013 R1200GSA for the new model. After careful thought, I have personally decided not to purchase a water cooled boxer. If I would have been riding when I was born in 1971, I feel would have had a similar rational to my purchasing choice. I would have picked a left over 1969 R69S over the 1973 R75/5 that I rode for 12 years. The R75 on paper was a better performing machine in every aspect compared to a R69S. However, specs on paper don't necessarily make it a better motorcycle. The characteristics of the sound and the feel of the old generation of bikes is a large part of my own subjective and overly dramatic love for the old bikes. I look at my old bike parked in the garage and I can hear it sing "Panzerlied." I brought our demo water cooled GS home a night and I heard it sing "Major Tom" as I closed the garage door. The worst part for me was that it wasn't the nice German version by Peter Schilling rather the "Gale" version from Breaking Bad.

The new bikes have their own personality and character. However, their character doesn't match mine. I like the underdog and the unorthodox, the model with inherent short comings.

Riding to me has always been a quest for perfection on my terms. Some like to be on the most technical roads and pick the best lines and run as smooth as possible. Me, I like to spot the Karmann Ghia in the yellow house's garage and nod at the wire haired dachshund basking in the sun. And take a poor line on the same technical road and still show front wheel to the squid with the cheesy Two Brother exhaust that thinks he's tearing it up all at the same time.

But I digress, the new Wasserboxers are the wave of the future. The bikes are fine pieces of equipment and can make any rider faster and safer then ever before. However, they don't help me to spot the dog or the car and they can't sing my tune.

North to Alaska

Sandi Valois

After finding a flier in September 2009 at Southeast Harley-Davidson motorcycle dealership advertising a month-long trip from Ohio to Alaska, I decided that would be the perfect Happy 50th birthday and Happy Retirement gift to ME! So, after speaking with Larry King, the man organizing the trip, and multiple meetings to get organized, I rented a 2010 Harley-Davidson Road Glide motorcycle to ride from Ohio to Alaska and back, departing on June 4, 2010, and returning on July 4, 2010. I was a little anxious about the long trip, having broken two ribs on March 20th. Larry King, my most excellent trip organizer and tour-guide is now one of my favorite long-distance travel buddies. Although several other folks were interested in going on the trip, in the end it was just Larry and I as we embarked on this great adventure. Larry is a retired pilot and currently employed as an inspector with the FAA. He writes travel articles for motorcycle magazines, and he has had several articles published regarding our trip to Alaska (with me as the "model" in the photos.)

Sandi at start of trip

Here are some excerpts from my travel blog which can be found in totality at www.travelpod.com/sanditravel. There was so much information overload on a trip like this, so I just nut-cut it down to the very basics. I was usually exhausted while writing the blog after riding all day, so if you do happen to peruse my blog, please accept my apologies for the typos!

Larry at start of trip

On **June 4, 2010** Larry and I departed Avon, Ohio at 0700 hours. Me riding the fully-loaded rental bike (a brand-new 2010 Harley-Davidson Road Glide) for the first time! It was very nice out, sunny, until we got about 75 miles south of the Mackinac Bridge in Michigan. It got cloudy, then drizzly, then downright nasty! We ended up in the worst of it when crossing the bridge and the paved lane was closed, so we had to "white-knuckle" it across the open grid in a driving rain, and high cross-winds. We road 578 miles today, with the last half in driving rain.

June 5 had us leaving Gladstone, Michigan at 0700 hours. We went through several national forests today. Saw a huge snapping turtle on the road, and lots of wild turkeys, and a couple of deer. Called the Harley dealer before we got to Duluth, Minnesota to see if my front tire needed to be turned around because the tread was backwards, and they rain was not being displaced properly. They said NOPE (Harley thing), so we kept chugging along. When we went over 584.7 miles (the most I've ridden in one day to this point) I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw the coolest rainbow! When we went over 600 miles, I stood up and did a butt-wiggle dance for the trucker behind me. I thought we were going to ride in the rain through most of Minnesota, but Moses must've been visiting that day for although the skies were dark and ominous, but there was a tunnel of light in the center, right over the highway. It was raining on both sides - but not on the highway. Way cool! We stayed in Crookston, Minnesota overnight.

Harley Shop at Minot, ND (closed on Mondays)

June 6 – We rode 596 miles today to Malta, Montana. Montana is flatter than Texas! Weather was awesome all day, and we cruised along at 80 to 85 mph (shhhh) most of the day. Saw Indians, casinos, and buffalo....water buffalo. I did not sleep much last night, and hadn't eaten dinner, and had very little for breakfast this morning - my day went downhill from there. I went to put a CD in the bike, and it looked funny. Well, all my CDs had fallen out of the case and were bouncing around in the tour pack. So, I ended up with a nice little collection of shiny musical Frisbees. Good thing the Road Glide has a radio. Then, I was cruising along at 80 mph, with 80 mph crosswinds, singing along with the Beatles when Larry screams up next to me and tells me I lost half of my rain suit! I have wrapped in around the armrests and had been keeping it between my travel tour pack and the bike's tour pack to push my pack forward so I could use the backrest on it. Well, the pants decided to go for a walk, or rather, a flight. We turned around and found them about a mile back. Phew! We stopped in Malta, Montana for the night. We stopped for gas in the morning, and the liner of my waterproof glove got all catawampus on me. I couldn't grab the brake lever! So, I rode steering with my knees for about 2 miles until I got it fixed. Things were rather uneventful after that, until I was dive-bombed by a seagull. Yes, they have LOTS of them in Montana! Damned near took my head off!

Twin Cities Saloon in Longview

June 7 - Rode Highway 2W to Shelby, then north on Route 15 to Canadian Immigration in Alberta. This old "cougar" was inspected by the most handsome young immigration agent I've ever seen! Yahoooo - welcome to Canada, Sandi! Just up the road to Leithbridge to the Harley shop to try to find some waterproof glove liners. They didn't have any but gave me some plastic gloves. Larry bought me a bell for the rental bike to ward off the road demons (after I already had ridden 1500 miles!). We stopped in Fort Maclead for lunch, in sight of the Rocky Mountains. Saw had to stop in Longview, Alberta to get gas, and put our rain gear on because the sky was black and the temperature dropped to about 45 degrees! Headed out and promptly hit a hail storm with small, but surprisingly painful pellets. We were trying to get to Route 40 via Highway 541, but Route 40 was still closed due to winter weather. So, we headed back to Longview to see if we could get a hotel room. Good thing about that little jaunt was that we saw a Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep in the road! We actually got to see him twice, once going and once coming back. Very cool! Also saw a small deer. Fortunately we were able to cancel the hotel reservation in Canmore, and were very fortunate to get a room in the small town of Longview. I had a few well-deserved drinks in the Twin Cities Cafe and Cowboy Bar which was full of very ruggedly good-looking working cowboys.....Wranglers, hats, boots, and all. I'm in HEAVEN…and Larry is laughing at me.

Harley shop in Leithridge, Alberta

Me lakeside

June 8 - Left Longview, Alberta at 0800 hours and headed for Banff and Jasper National Parks, British Columbia. It was cold and slightly drizzly in the morning, but then cleared up very nicely. We stopped at Lake Moraine and Lake Louise - both were absolutely GORGEOUS! Very, very crystal clear blue water. I bought a "bear bell" from the gift shop at the Lake Louise gift shop. It's a big jingle bell with a woven ribbon on it. I joked with the cashier, asking her if that was how the human remains were identified in the bear poop. She didn't think it was very funny. We stopped at Columbia Ice Field and saw the glaciers in Jasper Park. Then, off to two really cool waterfalls (Athabasca and Sunwapta), and the Saskatchewan River crossing. No bears, moose, or the like spotted today. Apparently, the weather is too good and they stay in the woods. Entered British Columbia at 1800 hours, and headed for Mount Robson, the highest mountain in B.C. Then, off to Valemont, British Columbia for the night at the foothills of the Rockies!

Banff Glaciers

Athabasca Falls

June 9 - Left Valemount at about 0745 hours in chilly weather (40 degrees), but clear, sunny skies. About an hour into our ride, we went through a wide sweeping turn on a nice high bridge over a river, and I looked to my right and thought, "That's a strange place for a trash bag. Then the "trash bag" turned its head and looked at me! My first wild black bear, sunning itself by the road. There was another one about 20 feet behind it. Another 10 miles down the road there was a mother and her cub. All in all today, I saw SEVEN black bears! I started keeping track with a Sharpie on my tachometer. The wildlife score is now Rams - 1, Bears - 7. You can't really stop for pictures anywhere; roads are pretty narrow in some spots. Still no moose yet. Me thinks I am looking too hard. We stopped for a bite to eat in Macleod (which was like a ghetto of British Columbia, out in the middle of nowhere) at a place called the Windy Hill Inn. I bought Harley music and ABBA CDs from the guy who ran the store, who was from Holland. I soon found out why it was called the Windy Hill. As soon as we took off, with me in the lead, the wind hit. I mean HIGH winds. Then, it started raining on top of it! Then, we hit construction - out in the boonies. These guys in big rigs were perched precariously on the mountainside, clearing away rockslide debris. We went through the town of Chedwyck, chainsaw carving capital. Unfortunately, we missed the annual chainsaw carving international contest; it started there today. The town has HUGE wood carvings all along the road. Wish I could have taken some pictures. We stopped and got gas in Saint George, a very cute little town, and then off for the last leg to Dawson's Creek, home of mile marker ZERO of the Alaska Highway. We rolled over 3,000 miles on odometers today! And hopefully, we will get to do laundry tomorrow night, as my socks tried to walk out of the room on their own today.

Windy Hill Inn (for good reason!)

Mile Marker 0 in middle of Dawson Creek

June 10 – We are heading to Fort Nelson, British Columba, after stopping at the Alaska Highway Mile Marker 0 in Dawson Creek to take photos first. Off on the Alaska Highway! Pretty interesting history behind the highway - you should Google it! We stopped at the Kiskatinaw Bridge, which is the oldest and only curved wooden bridge on the Alaskan Highway, near Dawson Creek. Took Route 97 North and it was fun to ride, with sweeping curves. At a local gas station we met a guy from the United Kingdom who was biking his way from New York to Alaska. NO, I don't mean on a motorcycle. I mean on a BI-CYCLE! Personally, think he was nuts. Folks probably think I am too, but we nutty folk have the most fun! We arrived in Fort Nelson, British Columbia around 1500 hours, and I am finally doing laundry! No wildlife today except for some antelope grazing near the highway. The only dangerous animal I'm afraid of is the senior citizens driving those huge rental RVs! They are taking up the whole road!

Sign at start of Alaska Highway

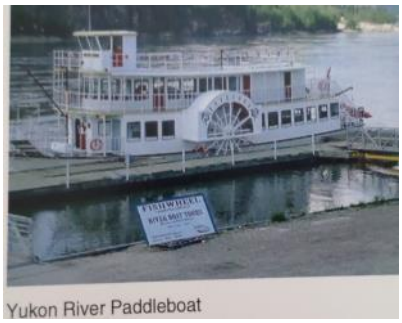
MADE IT TO THE YUKON TERRITORY!

June 11 - FINALLY IN THE YUKON TERRORITY! Saw a small caribou this morning about an hour after we got on the road. I was leading and really tested my riding skills on some very twisty roads with rock slides! We stopped in Toad River, Muncho Lake, which is a very cool lake right up against the highway which was carved out of the face of the mountain. Sunny day, then rain, HAIL, and more sun! All in 360 miles! Saw a herd of buffalo, and of course my camera was in my saddlebag. We saw a few more single male buffalo along the way, and a small ram. All the bikers who were headed south told us to be on the lookout for a grizzly bear cub. Well, we looked and looked, and finally about an hour later I saw him in a ravine way off the road. No way to stop to take a picture, of course, they just don't have "berms". There is just really no safe place to pull off the road and play tourist. We arrived in Watson Lake at 1600 hours and, heading out to the Sign Post Forest, where folks from all over the world post signs stating their hometowns. Thousands and thousands of signs, Actually pretty impressive, considering we are in the boonies. Tomorrow, we are off to White Horse.

Typical gas stop - few & far between

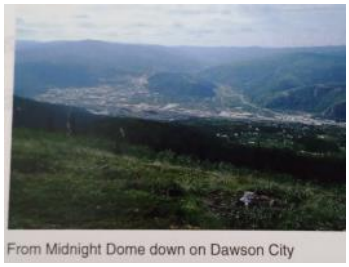
Buffalo Bull!

June 12 - Rode 330 miles today under cloudy skies and chilly (40 degree weather). Saw one black bear, but again, we couldn't stop to take a picture. Stopped at the waterfalls at Rancheria – just beautiful and the sun came out and cooperated for pictures! Stopped at Teslin at the bridge and had a nice lunch. Then, hit a brief and painful hailstorm. I had on my half-helmet and ended up with welts all over my face from the pellets bouncing up off the gas tank. Rode for a long time by Marsh Lake where the water is glacier blue. I was on bear watch all day, but sadly, none were to be seen. We stopped at the Yukon Harley Shop to get more fuel boost and a t-shirt - very expensive here! Got a patch that says "I rode the Alaska Highway", because I have! It was a very small shop, but then Whitehorse is not that big of a town! BUT, there is a Wal-Mart, so we're heading in for a taste of civilization. Off to Dawson City tomorrow, for TWO nights to rest-up before the push to Fairbanks, ALASKA via the Top-of-the-World Highway!


Yukon River Paddleboat

June 13 - Rode 338 miles today, from Whitehorse to Dawson City, Yukon Territory, mostly in the rain. We took pictures of the Klondike, a paddle-boat in Whitehorse. Off to Five Fingers Rapids. We stopped for a late lunch at a cool little place called the Moose Creek Lodge. It's an original log cabin. Good food, very nice ladies working in the kitchen, and the only dog I've ever met that didn't like peanut butter! My camera malfunctioned, so I sadly have not pictures from today. We are staying in Dawson City for two nights. Off to town tomorrow to check out some of the gold mines as this area is where the original gold strike was in the late1800's. Also, off to find some water-proof boots (my feet have been freezing), and another rain suit (mine is leaking). Hopefully, the weather will cooperate for the next two days, as we are heading up the "Top-of- the- World- Highway" on Tuesday, weather permitting. It is a gravel road, and sometimes impassable, and always very rough and not maintained.

Dawson City Hardware Store


From Midnight Dome down on Dawson City

June 14 - Got up late, had a nice breakfast and rode into Dawson City to sightsee. There are lots of cool old whorehouses, and the "cribs" behind them. I bought a book about the women who braved the elements and traveled out from the east coast to live here in the rough conditions. If I had been born back then, I probably would have done that, and started my own brothel! Rode to the top of the hill and took some pictures from Midnight Dome - you can see the whole of Dawson City from there. This is a very neat old gold mining town. Off tomorrow on the Top-of-the-World Highway into Alaska. Those are rough riding conditions, and I am keeping my fingers crossed that the road is open. We have been looking for riders coming back from that way to get feedback on the road conditions, but no luck so far. We heard a camper got stuck there for 27 hours 2 days ago. It hasn't been raining today, so hopefully, the road won't be too bad! The road is not "maintained" at all and is full of gravel and pot-holes. Sounds like fun, I can't wait. I am actually going to wear several pairs of undies in case I poop my pants! Yes, I am a little nervous.

Original Buildings from late 1800's

June 15 - Left Dawson City, Yukon Territory at 0745 hours and took the ferry across the Yukon River. Really tough to get on and off the ferry - lots of mushy sand and gravel as the ferry just pushes up against the bank of the river. You have to four-wheel over it all, only on two-wheels. Immediately got on the gravel of the Top-of-the-World Highway! What can I say – Completely Grueling ride of 140 miles to the Alaskan border. We were so high in elevation; we were above the tree line! It was a perfect day to accomplish this – somewhat sunny, some snow on the ground, and not too cold. We arrived at the Poker Customs and Border Patrol Station in Alaska around 1000 hours, with me having to peel my hands of the grips. What a ride. I do not recommend it for the faint of heart. This is the farthest northern entry point into the United States. The CBP Inspector was a nice young guy whose girlfriend is an ICE agent in Anchorage. Larry told him to give me some S*** since I was retired ICE agent, so the look on my face must have been priceless when he asked me what color underwear I was wearing. The Top-of- the-World-Highway on the Canadian side was bad, but the Unites States side was much worse!

Yippee - I made it!

It consists mostly of dips, potholes, and rough patches. We averaged about 35 mph. on the way to Boundary, Alaska, where civilization consists of two buildings and a landing strip. Shop operator is a guy from Boston, and he loves it up here. On to CHICKEN, Alaska which is a three-shop "town" with a bar, a shop, and a cafe. The whole "town" is owned by a female, who was very friendly and well-educated. She also loved it up here in the middle of nowhere. My first stop – the BAR! That was after I got off the bike and kissed the ground in gratitude that I made it in one piece to Chicken. The soup of the day (and every day) is ...you guessed it - CHICKEN! Food, no matter how meager, always tastes better when you have come to the brink of death and back! After a shot of whiskey and a beer, we took off on a very, very windy ride from Chicken to Tok, Alaska, our final stop for the day. I was pooped from the rough riding today. On to Anchorage tomorrow, to put the bikes in the shop for an oil change and damage assessment! I can honestly gloat that not many women have ridden the Top-of-the-World Highway on a fully-loaded big dresser Harley! So dusty.....can't wait to take a shower! And very, very relieved and more than proud that I conquered the "beast" today.

City of Chicken, AK

June 16 - Nice sunny day to ride, a bit chilly in the morning, but it was nice and toasty 68 degrees in Fairbanks where we got the bikes into Outpost Harley Davidson for oil changes. On the way I finally saw a BIG moose just standing about 15 feet off the side of the road at the edge of the woods! I thought it was a wood carving at first, because he wasn't moving! Just incredible how graceful it was when it loped back into the woods on those sky-high legs. We went through the town of North Pole, Alaska. Very cute with lots of Christmassy things, of course. I took off in a taxi from the Harley shop for a local sporting goods shop, since the Harley shop didn't have any rain suits in my size, or waterproof boots. I found some woodsy camouflage boots, extra long johns, and wool sock liners. It's a bit chilly up here, folks! We ended up riding to a place for dinner called The Pump. It's actually an old water pumping station made into a really huge restaurant/bar, right on the river. Really a neat place and good food too. We only went 206 miles today, which was just fine with me.

Santa in North Pole, Alaska

MOOSE!

June 17 - Overcast, but fairly warm as we left Fairbanks for Denali National Park. The weather cleared up as we entered the park though. Really pretty scenery, and we saw a moose and got a fuzzy picture; he was trucking along at a good clip! We could see the top of Mt. McKinley from Denali, but by the time we left the park and headed that way, it clouded up and we couldn't even find the mountain! Oh well, next time! I saw a mother moose and a really cute baby moose right off the road, but by the time I stopped and tried to hold the bike on a hill, they disappeared into the woods. We took a side-trip to the historic town of Talkeetna, Alaska.

Denali National Park

Me at Denali National Park

Fun, artsy little shops, with lots of foreigners milling around. I met four Danish guys, hikers. Nice calves on those guys. They were very interested in the Harleys, and especially all my little (naughty) stickers on my helmet! And I was very interested in them; they were all so cute, cute, cute and very friendly. We ran into a lot of construction today. BUT, we have gone over 5,000 miles on the trip so far! Sad side note: a guy on a green Harley-Davidson Road King, whom Larry and I both think we met at a gas station a few days ago in Dawson City, crashed on Monday on the Top-of- the- World Highway. We heard from the folks at the Harley shop in Fairbanks that he had to be airlifted to Anchorage, and was upgraded to critical condition. No further details. He rode the highway the day before we did, when it was still wet and mushy. Luckily, we had good dry weather on Tuesday to ride it. It's a very dangerous road! Off for a short ride tomorrow to have lunch in Seward, Alaska (340 miles round-trip), then back to Palmer for a second night. Went through Wasila today - I waved at Sarah Palin's house on the lake.

so very cool (literally)

June 18 – We left Palmer, Alaska at 0715 hours to head to Seward for lunch in 56 degrees and overcast drizzle. We headed into Anchorage and there was a huge fog bank, then I realized it wasn't fog, it was CLOUDS! We were riding even with the clouds – and it was way, way, freaking cool! The road is right above the water on Cooks Inlet; very nice scenery, even when overcast. There are lots of roadside waterfalls. We went to Portage Lake Glacier Park and saw ICEBERGS! Got to Seward around 1100 hours and I did the girly thing and went souvenir shopping! We had a very nice lunch looking out on the harbor at Ray's Waterfront. I had crab legs...Alaskan crab legs! I think they just call them crab legs....like the Chinese just call it "food", not Chinese food. We stopped back at Portage Glacier Park to see if the clouds had cleared, but no such luck. The big cruise ships dock there also. Rode to the House of Harley in Anchorage and bought a new rain suit. My old one is a PAIN to get on and off since it doesn't have zippers or Velcro on the legs. Now I am bright orange! The Harley folks told us to go to Alaska Leather to get the bottom of my chaps sewed back together. I bought a sheepskin butt-pad there, and they gave me a 10% law enforcement discount. And they did not charge for the sewing either. Really nice folks there! Anyone traveling to the area, stop in and see the kind folks at ALASKA LEATHER! We got back in Palmer at 1830 hours to fix the loose windshield trim on the Road Glide. Now I have electrical tape holding it together. Rode 376 miles total today, and off to Valdez tomorrow for two nights and maybe a cruise to see some whales! Fingers crossed!

sometimes behind is just as nice

waterfalls everywhere

June 19 - Left Palmer for Valdez after being woken up in the middle of the night by a woman crying over her husband, who apparently left her and took the dogs, and ended up in our hotel after an apparent drinking binge with a girlfriend. They were out in back of the hotel, and my room, almost all night until I dragged my tired butt out of bed and told her to shut the heck up (I did use other words). Anyway, the day started with very nice weather; 55 degrees and mostly sunny. Saw more glaciers in Mantanuska Park. Then, took a waste-of-time side trip to Lake Louise, Alaska (not at ALL like the one in Banff National Park in British Columbia).

Bridal Falls near Valdez

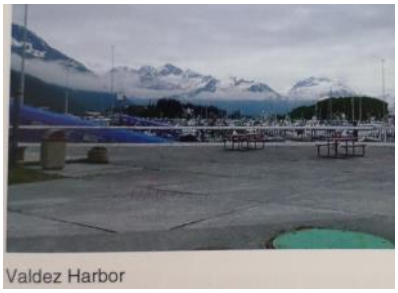
The road was paved but so frost- heaved and gravel covered, it was like riding a roller coaster, and not the fun kind. Stopped for lunch in Glenallen and a guy in the gift shop told me a biker went down about an hour before on the road we were just on! Said he hit gravel...no kidding…Off to Copper Center, an old mining town, a very cute, very little town, with very nice, very little museums. Like a town for munchkins. Next stop was Worthington Glacier - another cool spot (literally). I was just amazed to see in a huge glacier like that in person. You could actually hear it creaking. Then, Bridal Veil Falls and Kensington Falls - LOVE them! Larry didn't tell me we were passing the falls, so we rode around a bend in the road, and WHAM, there they were! Rode the last 30 miles to Valdez in the rain, after I had to back-track to retrieve my backpack with my new rain suit that blew off the bike (yes, again…). A very nice couple in a black SUV had stopped me to tell me the backpack was a mile behind me, and then flagged down Larry to tell him I had turned around. Such nice folk up here.

Worthington Glacier from the road

HUGE totem at the local college

June 20 - We had a nice Mexican dinner last night at Ernesto's in Valdez. It is owned by a former Mexican federal police officer and his family. I few margaritas later, I crashed and slept 12 hours! Thanks to black-out curtains - it never really does get dark here! I got to launder my stiff clothes again. Woke up at 0854 hours, just in time to get the last crumbs from the free continental breakfast! Had a 4.7 earthquake a few miles away just after 0900 hours. I had been through a few earthquakes in the Philippines, and knew that old familiar dizzy feeling you get right before. How appropriate, since old Valdez was pretty much destroyed by a 9.2 earthquake on March 27, 1964. So we went to see a cool movie at the Museum regarding that earthquake, and thanking our lucky stars we were not swallowed up by this one. Found out the whale-watching cruises are an all-day endeavor, so we are not going. Just going to check out the historical part of town and enjoy our "down" day. Valdez is a very small town, actually. I rode down by the waterfront to pick up a fisherman, er, I mean check on day boat tours. I talked to a local fisherman who was cleaning a 50 pound halibut. He fed the carcass to the seagulls (very well-fed seagulls). I tried to finagle a boat ride from him, but unlike the fish, he wasn't biting. I did, however, meet the one and only Department of Homeland, Customs and Border Patrol agent for the whole southern Alaska area! A really nice guy with lots of stories who let me take a picture of him and his truck (after I showed him my badge). He took a picture of me with the "Ice Cream Lady" and her pink truck. She is THE town character in Valdez. She would not let me take a picture with her until I donned her shark hat, which I happily did. According to the CBP guy, she also moonlights by having sex-toy parties. What a character she was! She is my friend on Facebook now. Larry and I rode up to see the Valdez Glacier and Glacier field. Not as big as some of the others, but still mighty impressive! Back to Tok, Alaska tomorrow via different a route.

Valdez Glacier chunks


Valdez Harbor

Chitna 3-mile lake

June 21 - Left Valdez this morning under sunny but chilly skies. Saw a silver fox just north of town. Larry decided to take a little side-trip to the historical town of Chitna. The 1900-era hotel had been renovated. The town was a link for the railroads and some of the gold rush miners back in the day, and became a ghost town after the gold rush subsided. Neat old buildings remain, and the area is known for its annual fishing contest at the lake. There are three nice little lakes heading up to it, 3-mile, 2-mile and 1-mile (yep, those are the real names!). Rough, rough road from where we got off Highway 4 North onto Highway 1 North. A whole lot of frost heaves, and tons of fresh gravel patches. Oh yeah. NOT a fun 353 mile ride today! We caught a few quick rain showers also along the way, but not enough to warrant my new rain gear (which I haven't worn since I bought). It's our last night in Alaska, so I stopped at the BIG souvenir shop by the hotel to spend some more money on stuff I do not need. We will be re-entering the Yukon Territory via the southern entry point at ALCAN, which is about 80 miles from Tok, Alaska. I had another fantastic Alaskan king crab leg dinner at Fast Eddy's down the street from the motel. Tomorrow, we are going to try to make it to Skagway, Alaska, via Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. It really depends on how bad the roads are from Tok to Whitehorse. Might have to just stay there for the night (after all, Whitehorse has a Wal-Mart!). Skagway should be an interesting town; lots of history there. I've been reading up on the "good time gals" of the Gold Rush era --- tough broads! I think I would have liked to have lived back then, except that the motorcycle hadn't really been invented yet.

Me and Burl Tree, Sinona, AK

ALCAN Hwy gravel mess

June 22 - Left Tok, Alaska for Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, but only made it to Haines Junction, Yukon Territory because I was EXHAUSTED! We rode 305 miles - very rough miles. The Alcan Highway is very torn up and there are a lot of fresh gravel patches. My arms felt like they were going to fall off! It's very strenuous riding, constantly avoiding the frost heaves in the road in between the gravel pits. But, I can say I survived the Alcan Highway now also! So, we stopped and stayed at the crappiest hotel we could find....well, it was the crappiest hotel, and it was the only one that had vacant rooms. But, we had to wait for a room, and then they gave it away to someone else! So, I spoke to the front desk clerk/bartender/jack-of-all trades, and got us two rooms for $65, for both. At least I did not have to sleep under my bike in my new rain suit. Did I mention the hotels up here do not have A/C? Our rooms were over the kitchen, and hot as hell at night. So, I polished off my bottle of Jack Daniels (yes, I had one for "emergencies") and packed it in for a sleepless night. But, my arms and shoulders felt a lot better in the morning! The absolute highlight of the day was that after riding the worst 12 straight miles of gravel and muddy, slippery road, we saw a momma grizzly bear and a cub off the side of the road! She was checking out the construction traffic apparently! I was floored...only 10% of folks see grizzlies up here, and we saw a momma with her cub . My pictures are sort of fuzzy because I was at a weird angle to her when she came out of the woods.

Grizzly and cub under

Nice view

She had come out once, and then went back into the woods. Larry was ready to take off, but I kept watching for her. I got my camera out, and sure enough, she came back to the edge of the woods after all the traffic cleared. The cub is really hard to see; it was either behind her or under her. Larry took some good pictures in high resolution, so his will be much better. Major highlight of the trip, so far! Onto Skagway, Alaska tomorrow. Lots of history there regarding the gold rush. It's also, a stop for the huge cruise ships, which means….SHOPPING!

Red Onion Saloon, Skagway, AK

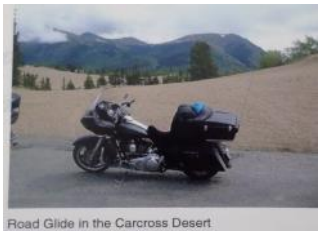
June 23 - Left Haines Junction, Yukon Territory for Skagway, Alaska in chilly, but sunny weather. We made it to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory before the skies opened up. It rained steadily the remaining 2.5 hours. Really slow-going at 55 miles per hour. When we went through Alaska Customs at Skagway, the Inspector shook my hand. Apparently Larry, who entered ahead of me, had told the guy that I was retired from the same agency. Very nice inspector; he's been working at Skagway since 1965. He loves it there too. The terrain in Skagway is GORGEOUS! Craggy rocks covered with lichen, beautiful pine trees, and neat little ponds everywhere. It was raining too much on the way in to take pictures. Skagway is a very small town with a lot of history. I've been reading a book, "Klondike Women", and it describes the trials and tribulations of not only the women who sought a better life in the northwest, but the gold rush folks, some of whom settled in this area after running out of money on their way north to stake their gold claims. The town has wooden boardwalks still. It is the oldest incorporated city in Alaska (1900). HUGE cruise ships are docked here today, and they are bigger than the town! The downtown area is about 15 blocks by 3 blocks, jam-packed with souvenir and gift shops - and I went into every single one of them, in the rain, and had a blast! I met folks from all over the world. We had a nice lunch at the Skagway Brewery. We are staying in an old Army barracks which has been recently been renovated and very nice; much nicer than last night's motel. The hotel was named after the fictitious radio character who was a member of the North West Mounted Police, who with his dog "Yukon King" fought against evil. Ironically, this hotel backs up to the old red light district and gambling houses. I love the old history.

Monument to Miner's in Skagway, AK

June 24 – Raining hard in Skagway, Alaska. There has been a constant mist in the air since we got here. We had breakfast at the Sweet Tooth, the only place in town serving breakfast. The town is dead; all the cruise ships left last night. We had a great dinner last night at the Skagway Seafood Company and watched one of the big cruise ships very slowly back out of the harbor. I don't know how they maneuver those things. It was really crappy out last night, but we found a cool little waterfall while walking back to the hotel. We stopped back in at the Harley shop in Whitehorse so Larry could get his front tire replaced as it was cupping really bad. Surprisingly, it was hot as hell in Whitehorse. The weather here is so unpredictable!

Me at Skagway Bridge (in rain)

a desert in the snowcapped mountains...???


Road Glide in the Carcross Desert

Got out of my raingear, and put on leathers, then proceeded to freeze for the next two hours! We stopped in little town of Carcross, Yukon Territory, home of the Carcross DESERT - yep, it is really a desert in the Northwest Territory. It's a real sandy desert, like the Sahara, only on a much smaller scale. I will remember Carcross as the place I slid sideways into a gas station in the mud, and down went the bike. Well, anyway the bike went down, I had jumped off. We had a hard time getting it back up, since the tires kept sliding in the slime! CRAP! I really didn't want to dump the bike on this trip....Oh well! Did I mention that all the gas stations have gravel? And all the side roads? And most of the roads. OK – ALL of the roads. And they lay down this stuff called calcium silicate on the gravel to keep the dust down, which turns to snot when wet. Seriously, it should be bottled as a lubricant. So, off we go back to Teslin, Yukon Territory, which is right on the Teslin River in a very beautiful area. We came through here on the way out to the Yukon Territory, but didn't spend the night. Thankfully, I had a chance to wash the crusty clothes again. I spoke to an Indian teacher who is in the area teaching classes to the local Indian kids. I must say I have met some extremely interesting folks on this trip. Unfortunately, left a pair of jeans and my favorite leather belt in the room, never to be seen again. Tomorrow we are off to Dease Lake, British Columbia and we will be riding on the Kaiser Highway for the next two days. It is the only other route to Alaska from British Columbia and most of the route is very remote. Probably not as remote at the Top-of- the-World-Highway! It's supposed to be a good area to spot bears. The road was put in to transport workers to the Kaiser Copper Mine, which is now defunct. We will be going through Jade City. Yep, they sell jade there.

June 25- Left Teslin, Yukon Territory for Dease Lake, British Columbia under sunny but chilly skies of 50 degrees. I saw the biggest porcupine I have ever seen in my life crossing the road about 12 miles outside of Teslin. It looked like a large dog with spikes. No pictures; had my heated gear on and he would have been gone by the time I took my gloves off and dug my camera out. I saw a black bear about an hour out of Telsin. We passed him and turned around. He was still there, so we took some pictures as he ambled across the road (didn't he see the "no bear crossing" sign?). So very neat, it still shocks me to see so much wildlife right at the roadside. The road was kind of torn up (BC 37 South), but manageable, then turned to fresh packed gravel. Also manageable. Not fun, but manageable. But, it was so nice to ride in the great outdoors with no power lines anywhere in sight. Stopped at Jade City, which is just a few buildings in the middle of nowhere, but they mine jade from the local hills. I've never seen so much jade in my life! Extremely expensive though. They had big saws outside and they cut the raw stone right on the side of the road. Saw another black bear just outside of Jade City, but I couldn't get a picture because I had one of the few cars on the road running up my tail at the time. Nothing much in Dease Lake, but there are two hotels, which the only ones around for miles and miles. But, I met an interesting Italian motorcyclist on a Ducati who was traveling the area by himself, just because he had never done it. He was an interesting chap, and we shared a bit of my Jack Daniels while sitting and chatting in the hotel lobby (nope, no bar in this joint). Off to Stewart tomorrow. Just a few drizzles today, at least I could wear my half-helmet most of the day! We rode 302 miles today.

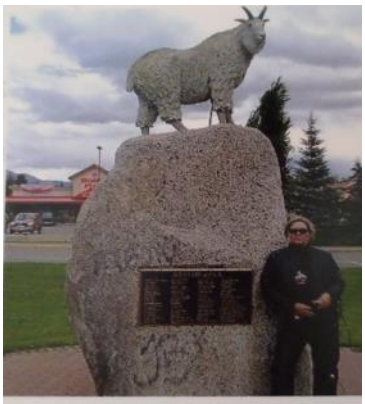
Who me??

World Famous Glacier Inn Bar in Hyder, AK

June 26 - Left Dease Lake, British Columbia around 0800 hours under cloudy skies and 53 degrees. The sun came out and we had an absolutely beautiful ride down by the lake at the Spectrum Mountain Range. Nice forested area, with some bears. No berms on the roads, though, so we couldn't pull off to take pictures. I did get some bear pictures further down the road; apparently my reward for successfully navigating very treacherous and slimy gravel patches on steep and winding mountain roads. We stopped at Bell 2, a heli-skiing lodge, which was really neat to see out in the middle of the boonies. Very expensive, with little Scandinavian-style cabins out back. There was a helicopter ferrying logs; I got a couple of pictures of that. I think this is where the movie stars come to ski- it is in the BOONIES. On to Stewart, British Columbia, this is a very depressed little town. It is right across the border from Hyder, Alaska, where they have a very strong drink at the famous Glacier Inn Bar – they say if you drink it you get "Hyder-ized". Don't know if I'll be able to try it, since we have to come back across the border entry to British Columbia to the hotel. No, I did NOT get "Hyder-ized". Most folks who want to say they've been to Alaska come to Hyder since it's the furthest south border crossing into Alaska. We are hitting it on the way OUT of Alaska after seeing a lot more of the Great White North than most folks get to see. Long ride tomorrow, but stopping in a cute little town called Smither on the way. Tourist trap, which means I'm going to love it.

Gorgeous Mountains

June 27 - Left Stewart under cloudy skies and 52 degrees. We met a couple from New Zealand last night at the Glacier Inn in Hyder, Alaska. They flew to California, bought an RV, and are traveling until August, here and in the United States. We also met three guys from British Columbia in the hotel parking lot last night, on two BMWs and a Yamaha. They were just out for a 4-day ride. Nice guys, very funny. The mother of one of them died last night, so they were headed back home early. But, we had breakfast with them, and were leapfrogging with them on the road all day. Sporadic rain showers, then gorgeous sun, then rain. Weather is so unpredictable here because of the mountains and valleys. Rain suit on, rain suit off, repeat, several times. We wandered off the road for gas at an Indian village with lots of tall totem poles. Not much going on there, but it was strange that there was this large grouping of totem poles in the middle of nowhere. We were going to stop in Burns Lake, but decided to make up some mileage, and went on to Vanderhoof, the geographic center of British Columbia. Pretty big town, for a change. We have gone almost 8,000 miles so far on this trip! Yep, my butt has calluses, and I am loving every minute.


Me and goat in Smither, BC

June 28 - Rode 405 miles today, starting off in the rain from Vanderhoof, British Columbia then to cloudy skies with slight scattered showers, to sunny and 70 in Kamloops, British Columbia. No pictures today, just riding like bats outta hell to get to Kamloops. From 100 Mile House to Kamloops is beautiful rolling hills (I mean BIG hills), with lots of big horse farms, and tons of logging - don't get too close behind the logging trucks, or you'll get whacked with flying bark (sounds like the name of a band...Flying Bark).

And VERY windy, riding sideways for 8 hours isn't fun. Rolled over 8000 miles on the odometer this morning - WOW, even I'm impressed! Off to Golden, British Columbia tomorrow, through cold mountains again and avalanche tunnels. I have been wearing full gear every day, and for those who want to know it means long johns, ski pants, chaps or rain pants, and 4-5 layers up top, plus a balaclava and full-face helmet, AND heated jacket liner and glove liners, and my waterproof boots. The roads are generally in terrific condition in British Columbia, except for the few and far between construction sites now. Very fun riding through long, sweeping turns, and British Columbians like to drive very, very fast! I think I've seen only one RCMP highway patrol car in the whole time we've been in Canada! Yep, we've been speeding, because I got tired of converting kilometers to miles, so when the sign says 100 (Km), we go close to 100 (mph)! Bike's running great. More from Golden, B.C. tomorrow! My first really unusual road kill - a HORSE! Must've gotten loose and been hit by a BIG truck.

Bike mountaintop in Revelstoke, BC

View from highway near Revelstoke

June 29 - Left Kamloops, British Columbia under sunny skies and 60 degrees. Terrain went from rolling hills to mountains again. Stopped in Revelstoke, British Columbia and rode up the mountain to the top of the mountain (Meadowpark) at the snowline. SNOW on the mountain still, so we couldn't ride all the way to the top as road was still on winter closure. Lots of very tight switchbacks on the road. And scary with all the RVs taking up both lanes, but I survived! Slippery moss and gravel on the road. First day I've ridden in a week+ without my heated/raingear. Nice and warm, but windy. Went through some avalanche tunnels; weird tunnels, very dark. Going through Glacier National Park tomorrow, then back into the good ole U.S. of A.! Question of the week... What's slicker than wet and sandy, gravel roads? Flattened bear poop! I absolutely LOVED British Columbia! The scenery is awesome, the folks are really nice and friendly, and they really love their nature here - no trash on the roadsides, very clean. More from Montana tomorrow!

SNOW at the treeline in Revelstoke

Me in Glacier Park

June 30 - Left Radium Hot Springs for Coram, Montana. Chilly but nice out. Rode 396 miles, a lot of it through Glacier National Park, Montana – which is just…absolutely…..stunning. My mouth was open the whole ride. I will definitely ride back out here someday. My camera battery died halfway through the ride through the park. There are cows roaming freely in the park, just hanging out by the sides of the roads. We re-entered the United States at Chief's Mountain, Montana with exactly 9,000 miles on the bike. The rest of the trip is just busting butt riding to get home. We are going to try to get to North Dakota tomorrow. I'm sad the trip is coming to an end, but glad to be heading home to sleep in my own bed for a change.

Glacier National Park Tunnel

Chief Mountain

Bikes in the Canada Rockies (again!)

Me goofing around on bike

July 1 - Froze my bazookas off this morning on our way out of Glacier National Park area. We rode 590 miles, most of it through flat and boring Montana on Route 2. I did have a bird dive-bomb the bike, and explode all over the right side of the bike. We stopped in Ray, Montana because all the rooms in Williston were taken up by oil and gas field workers. I was ready to curl up under the bike I was so pooped. We have been looking for another Harley shop to get another oil change, but we keep hitting them when they are closed Canadian or local holidays.

July 2 - Rode 582 miles today from Ray, North Dakota to Duluth, Minnesota. About 500 of it was in very strong crosswinds. My right shoulder is killing me, and I am exhausted. Not much else to write, except that it was probably our first full day of riding without any rain in over two weeks. This part of the ride is just plains, PLAIN old plains. Not much scenery, no animals, no nothing. 580 mile of nothingness. There was a terrific storm last night in Ray, North Dakota, with incredible lightening. It woke me up at 2am so I watched it for a bit. I've never seen lightening go sideways! Between that, and the very loud trains behind the motel, I didn't get much sleep at all. And there was a really ugly picture of a little black kid in a weird place on the wall of my room. I freaked me out, it was so spooky looking; on black velvet, no less. It was just there to cover up the fuse box. I had to take him down, and turn him around so I could sleep! Don't know where I will lay my head tomorrow night. I guess it depends on how the shoulder holds up.

Minnesota biker chick

July 3 - After a nice day of riding in the sunshine (496 miles) through mostly flat and boring country-side, we found some nice cabins on the river in Michigan. Ended up not being so quiet! The locals decided to start celebrating the 4th of July early, and continued until 3am. Thank God for ear plugs. I had to keep the windows open because it was hot as blazes up there, and the cabin had no air-conditioning. Tomorrow should be nice riding alongside Lake Superior. The beaches were crowded for the holiday weekend. The water was incredibly blue and very pretty. AND I actually got to see the Mackinac Bridge in Michigan this time, in the sun. When we went over it heading out, it was pouring, so all I could see was the wet, grated road in front of me. It was still very, very windy going over the bridge. Should be about 420 miles to home, easy riding day tomorrow. All in all, this had been a FABULOUS trip. And YES, I would do it again! I remember places by smells - British Columbia smells like pine and cedar, the Yukon Territory smells like "history", and Alaska smells like fish - LOL! I thoroughly enjoyed the scenery and the stops along the way. I would love to go back, and catch some places there just wasn't enough time to dally in. I thoroughly enjoyed learning about the history of the Klondike Gold Rush, and read two books during the trip on the subject. Just amazing what those folks went through.

July 4 - Gorgeous day for riding from Indian River, Michigan to mi casa. Only 424 miles today, in the sunshine! Not as much holiday traffic as I expected on the roads. IN TOTAL - ***I RODE 11,132 MILES ON THIS TRIP***! WOW! My butt feels it, too. Larry and I stopped at Lake Erie Harley Davidson to take an end of trip picture, even though they were closed for the holiday today. See guys, I brought the bike back in one piece! I pity the person who has to wash and detail it, and thank goodness I bought the extra insurance.

MADE IT BACK!

Larry gave me a big hug and said something that made me tear-up. That he would ride with me anywhere. I have many mixed feelings today - SO very glad to be home, but I already really miss seeing all the sights and meeting all the folks along the way. I met so many interesting people from all over the world. Amazing where people end up! I am exhausted, but exhilarated at the same time. I never thought I could accomplish a ride like this. It truly tested my riding skills as we rode on some very rough terrain, and in some not-so-pleasant weather. My biggest accomplishment was riding the TOP OF THE WORLD HIGHWAY from the Yukon Territory to Alaska. And on a big Harley! It was 130 miles of pure hell on two-wheels! Some riders didn't make it - I heard the one guy who went down the day before we crossed ended up dying a few days later in Anchorage. The Alcan Highway was another challenge with all the frost-heaves, and gravel from the many construction areas. All extremely slippery with that snot they put down on it to fill the gravel, and then wet it down. BUT, I AM HOME, AND IN ONE PIECE!

Where to next…?

Road Glide in one piece still

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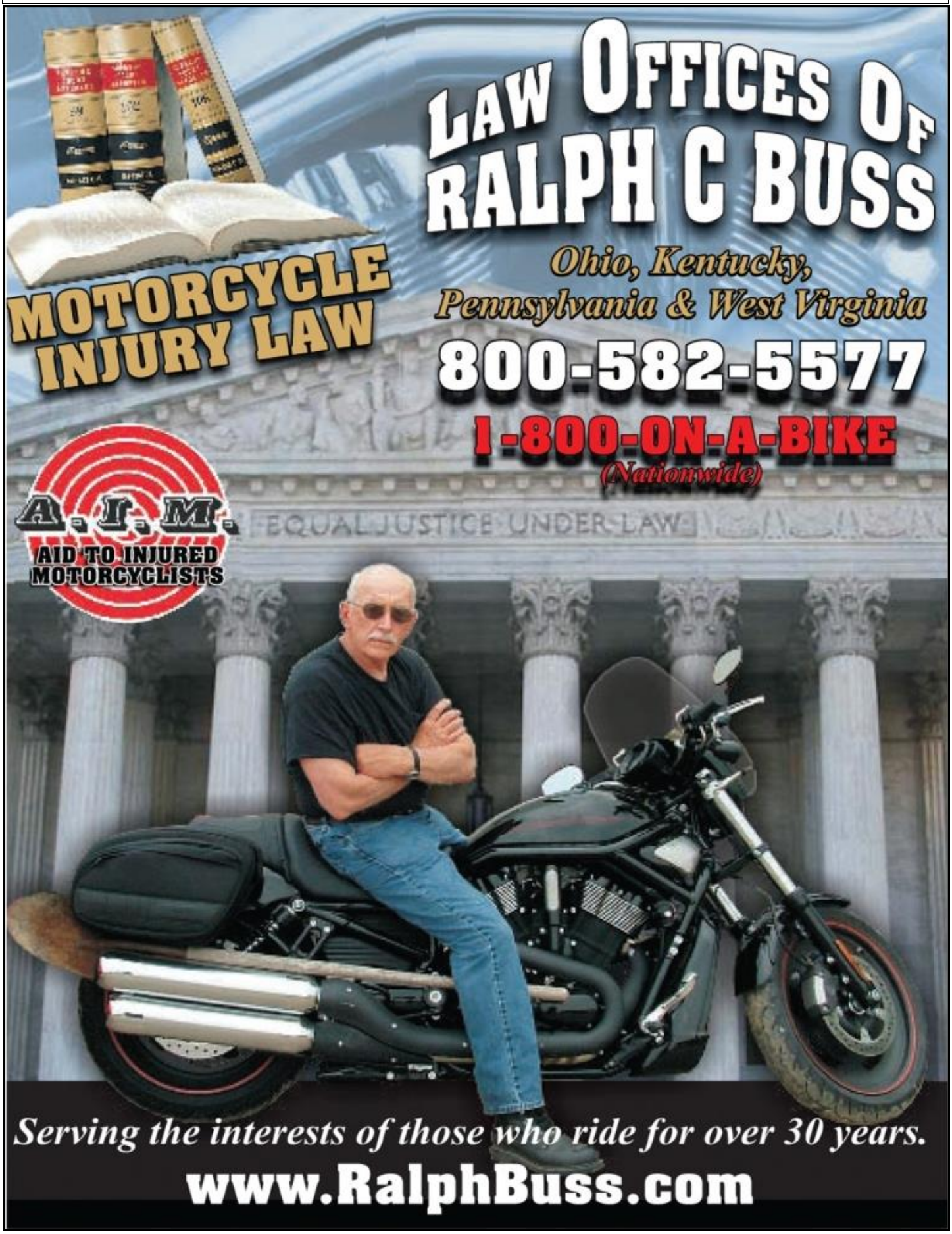
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