



# THE BEEMER READER

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Page

1. From the editor by Brian Radford
- 2, 3 & 4 Cuatros Amigos Ride the Baja by Geoff Stevenson
5. Photos, Words to Live By submitted by Geoff Stevenson & Club hats & T shirts
6. Roads I Have Ridden by Vince Martorino, Concerning the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event
7. Volunteers needed, For Sale & Rally Notices
8. Club Contacts & Ride Schedule

## EDITORIAL

It took some fast talking and maybe a bit of the old bull dust to get the Ass't Ed. onto the pillion seat, but we managed to get to the Brigantine Pub (thanks, Bob Leitch for organizing the event) and it was good to see about 25 members out on a glorious spring morning. We got there in time for lunch after a very short fide from SSI via Crofton. Some were already leaving when we arrived, might be that I should switch to a different deodorant. Marjie and I went afterwards on a leisurely ride up the Old River Road to Lake Cowichan and on to Honeymoon Bay, enjoying the sights, sounds and smells of springtime in the Cowichan Valley as can be best appreciated from the saddle of one's trusty bike. We went home at a somewhat brisker trot on Highway 18 and Herd Road to the 3:30 PM ferry back to our Rock. Ass't Ed. usually declines to participate outside of June, July and August but I think she was pleased to make an exception for a day as nice as last Saturday.

Many people, in and out of motorcycling circles, have asked where and when I plan to ride this summer. For some unknown reason I've been unable to provide a coherent reply. The range of choice is simply more than my feeble mind can encompass. Among the possibilities is the Washington State BMW Rally, returning after several years to Republic which is the centre of very fine riding country on either side of the border, being a short ride south from Grand Forks or Midway. The dates are 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July and I'm just about convinced that we should be there. Maybe you should too.

Cheers **Brian**

**SAT. MAY 2ND, BREAKFAST OLYMPIC VIEW GOLF  
COURSE 9:30 AM**

## CUATRO AMIGOS RIDE THE BAJA

By Geoff Stevenson

The snow at the side of the highway was plowed four feet high. It was raining. It was desperately cold (Jorgen's thermometer read 1 deg Celsius). Traffic was running at a steady 70 mph. And it was getting dark.

We were cresting Black Butte Summit in Northern California. At just under 4,000 feet, we'd hardly call it a serious mountain pass. But this was mid-February and it seemed we were pushing our luck. Did I say it was cold?

The Baja was wonderful in February and March, they promised me. Of course, nobody had talked much about the challenge of getting there from here.

An hour after the summit, we were sitting in a Motel Six in Redding, CA. The room was warm and the beer cold and Black Butte was a distant memory.

I think the shrinks call this stuff rationalization. I prefer to see it as just one of the challenges of long-distance riding. Besides, until we got home three weeks later, the weather was pretty much perfect. And they were right: It was hot in Mexico; in fact, with a couple of days over 35deg., it was almost too hot!

There were four of us: Your regular correspondent, Jorgen Andersson, former club member Brian Hudson, and Doug Linfield, a retired Mountie from Kelowna, a long-time friend of Brian's and someone who'd been to Mexico more than a dozen times and knew the Baja really well.

Doug rode an 1100RT (the only one I've seen with wire wheels); we three were mounted on Suzuki V Stroms: Brian on a 1000 and Jorgen and I on 650s (known as Wee Stroms). The bikes covered a total of more than 35,000km together. (Doug's brother Gord, on a second R1100RT, also rode with us for two days)

The Suzukis ran perfectly. Doug arrived in Redding on the back of a tow truck, but we guessed that this was a fuel problem related to winter storage. We all desperately needed gas in Redding and we reckoned that some methyl hydrate (gas line anti-freeze) in Doug's tank would cure the problem. It did.

Among us, we own four pickup trucks and taking two of them with two bikes in each box certainly crossed our minds more than once. But it seemed somehow like a cop out – although I'm not sure I believed that as we crested Black Butte in the rain and cold.

After Redding, we didn't waste much time. We stayed mostly on I5, keeping east of Los Angeles to avoid the worst of that city's congestion. Our shortest day was 586km and four days after leaving home, we crossed the Mexican border at Tecate, 2,450km from Victoria.

Well, you don't cross the border as we do at, say, the Peace Arch. You see a Mexican flag beside the road and there's certainly a border post (of sorts). But there's nobody there to stop you or to check documents (in fact, nobody even asked for our passports until we rode into Guerrero Negro, some 850km farther south).

Mexico didn't start well. Tecate is a dusty border town with poor street signs. We found the highway to Ensenada and were heading southwest on a four-lane section when a woman in a minivan to Jorgen's left, suddenly turned right. Fortunately, he realized what she was doing and turned right with her, let her get to the curb and rode on.

I think we'd ridden perhaps 5km in Mexico at that stage. We all had special Mexican insurance, but an accident (even one caused by someone else) would have been an awful start to the trip. Good defensive riding, Jorgen! Over the next 10 days we saw plenty of crazy overtaking, the odd semi using all of his lane and part of ours on tight corners, but overall I'm not sure the driving was any worse than we see around here – after all, who among us hasn't seen more than a few little old ladies (or men) in the Sidney area who clearly shouldn't be allowed on the road?

We spent our first night in Mexico in Ensenada. This is a city of around 400,000 people just a couple of hours from San Diego and, with a cruise ship terminal, it's a pretty cosmopolitan place.

It was Carnival and we watched some enthusiastic young dancers moving with gusto to a loud Latin beat – with the strobe lights to match. There were dozens of riot police in attendance, but all we saw was a lot of people (and plenty of families) having a good time.

(Of course, middle-aged gents who've had a hard day's ride are usually in bed early; perhaps after a few barrels of Tecate and Pacifico had been swilled down, things changed for the worse).

The Northern Baja is heavily cultivated (we've probably all bought Mexican asparagus or strawberries, but there are also large vineyards, pineapple plantations and vegetable market gardens and tree/plant nurseries). But as you head south, the green countryside turns to brown, the towns are farther apart – and the cacti get taller (we saw plenty of saguaro cactus plants 40 feet or more). Soon you're in the high desert, the road gets straighter and, as you track southeast and away from the Pacific, the thermometer rises.

The Baja used to be famous (infamous?) for the long gaps between gas stations – and also for the number of Pemex stations that had no gas (the government is the only gas retailer in the country, they take only cash, but the good news was that regular gas was around 65 cents Canadian/litre).

We were running on fumes for a while when Jorgen and I were coming home, but this was due mainly to pilot error, since we rode past a Pemex when we should have stopped to fill up. I think the longest gap between pumps was around 320km, which is hardly a problem for the modern bike (Harleys with their peanut tanks excepted).

The newest Pemex stations were as modern as anything in Canada. But getting to them was often an adventure. One new station not far south of Ensenada had probably been open only a few weeks. It boasted a modern concrete apron around the 10 or 12 pumps – but between the concrete and the highway was mostly sand; and the drop from the pavement to the sand was 8-9 inches (and Jorgen and I bottomed out our centre stands making the transition).

Pemex has obviously been taking lessons from North America on the non-gasoline marketing side, too. The attached convenience stores invariably boasted shelf after shelf of junk food, chips and pop. We'd hoped to buy a ready-made sandwich for lunch at one station, but found nothing but bags of unhealthy calories and settled for beef and bean burritos in a wooden shack that would have been closed down by the Victoria Health Department (the food was delicious and a hearty meal cost about \$3 each).

After a day of thundering through the high desert, we felt some relaxation was in order and headed east to Bahia de Los Angeles, on the Sea of Cortez. This road was gravel until a few months ago and is a great piece of pavement.

In Bahia de L.A., Brian and Doug led us to Raquel and Larry's, a motel-bar-restaurant just a hundred yards from the water. (With a number of off shore islands, this is a very protected bay, and the fishing seemed pretty good as we saw modern gringo fishboats everywhere – and a couple of guys cleaning a 20-odd-pound tuna). The pavement ends in Bahia de L.A., so we headed west on the new blacktop, presented our passports at the checkpoint in Guerrero Negro and found a motel there, hoping to see grey whales the next day.

G.N. is windy and dusty (since most of the roads off the highway seemed to be sand) and home to the biggest salt plant in the world (the evaporative ponds stretch for miles and the plant ships more than 5 million tons of the stuff a year).

Our guide book suggested that we could ride out to the salt-loading dock and see whales for free, but this turned out to be another urban myth. However, in Port San Carlos, on Bahia Magdalena, a couple of days south, we had the experience of a lifetime, spending time beside a grey whale and her calf – and being able to stroke both, neither of whom apparently had any fear of humans.

Size might have been a factor here. The mother was 45 feet long and the calf probably a bit under 20. Adults weigh up to 75,000 pounds, the calves 1,500 to 2,000 pounds at birth. Were they concerned about a few insubstantial people?

These great mammals spend summers in Alaska and winters in Baja California. They breed every second year and the calves are born in the warm waters of the Baja. They swim around 8-10,000 miles on their roundtrip, pausing only for 10- or 15-minute catnaps.

We paid about \$35 each to charter a 25-foot fishing boat with a 75 hp Yamaha over the transom. If there's a better bargain for a tourist, I don't know what it is.

(As a sailor, I always worry about the quality of the maintenance when I board a boat I don't know. This trip started shakily as the V4 outboard first ran on three cylinders. I signalled three fingers to the skipper and he frowned. But the motor soon burst into full song and ran the rest of the trip on all four cylinders. I flashed four fingers this time – and the skipper smiled broadly.)

It took close to an hour to find the whales. The bay is about 400 square miles, so this was no great surprise. There were six or seven boats active this day and the skippers had VHF radios. Eventually, the boats more or less encircled the whales and we spent 30 or 35 minutes watching these powerful creatures swim elegantly and slowly among our boats.

For the next few days we explored La Paz and Cabo San Lucas, recharging our batteries for the dash north. The original plan had been to be on the road for a month, but Jorgen was home in Victoria after exactly three weeks. (I stopped in Seattle that day, since Anita and I were looking after our son's house while he and our daughter-in-law were in New Zealand. Brian and Doug were just a day or two behind us).

Cabo was bristling with a Wal-Mart, a modern marina with lots of seven-figure yachts and multi-million-dollar homes being built higher and higher on the hills that surround the town.

The new shopping mall on the waterfront was offering Prada and Gucci and some of the silverware for sale would have been right at home in Milan or Paris. There were several expensive championship golf courses and a six-lane highway snaked through town.

It seemed to me this was a town desperately trying to overtake, say, Fort Lauderdale or Waikiki. Will it succeed? We'll check back in 10 years. The local real estate paper advertised several private homes for more than \$4 million US, but you'd have to think the teetering world economy is going to lower those prices pretty soon.

We stopped for a coffee in the Hotel California (remember the Eagles' song?) in Todos Santos. This was a place with great character; I almost expected Ernest Hemingway to step into the courtyard and invite us to go fishing. La Paz was "home" for three nights and I walked around a fair chunk of the downtown area. I also bought 15 postcards for friends around the world – wondering how long the postcard can survive in the digital age. (And discovering that buying stamps to take the cards to three countries when you don't speak much Spanish and the clerk doesn't speak much English was quite a challenge).

La Paz was also our only brush with the law. La Mordida, it's called, literally the bite or bribe.

Stop signs are common in all the larger towns, just as in Victoria, but the stop sign is often on what we'd consider the main road – with the result that traffic approaching from a sidestreet often has the right-of-way. (And the typical Mexican driver has no intention of actually stopping – he slows a bit and looks either way, but routinely drives through at 10-15km/h.)

We were heading north out of La Paz and had slowed with the traffic for a succession of Alto signs. I was paying careful attention, but had certainly not always come to a full stop, when I saw a flashing blue light in my rearview mirror.

This turned out to be two cops in quads. One said he was stopping me because I hadn't stopped completely at all the Altos (which was true). It was not clear how much English my interrogator spoke (I often had the impression in Mexico that a number of people who claimed to speak no English in fact understood lots). However, after he'd reviewed my passport and registration papers and now had my driver's licence in his hand it became clear that he could take me to the police station where I would pay a 1,000-peso fine (about \$85 Canadian). Or, I could fork over 500 pesos here and there would be "No problema."

What's a guy raised under the rule of law and due process to do? I thought of offering to pay, say, 300 pesos. And it did cross my mind that, in a perfect world, I'd be able to get this extortionist in front of a judge – and perhaps get him drummed off the force.

But the rule of law in La Paz is clearly a long way from Canada. I handed over a 500-peso bill and he returned my licence.

Jorgen was watching all this and my accuser motioned to shake both our hands. His seemed excessively sweaty and we wondered if this was his first turista shakedown.

His buddy, who looked older – and was certainly more relaxed about all this – also shook our hands. He was a cool customer; perhaps he'd been doing this for years.

(To be continued).

See page 5 for photos



Photos by Geoff Stevenson

### **WORDS TO LIVE BY**

Four wheels move the body. Two wheels move the soul.

Life may begin at 30, but it doesn't get real interesting until about 70 mph.

If you wait, all that happens is that you get older.

Saddlebags can never hold everything you want, but they can hold everything you need.

The best alarm clock is sunshine on chrome.

Catching a yellow jacket in your shirt at 70 mph can double your vocabulary.

There's something ugly about a bike on a trailer.

If you can't get it going with bungee cords, wire and electrician's tape, it's serious.

Only a biker knows why a dog sticks his head out the car window.

Bikes parked out front mean good stuff inside.

If you want to get somewhere before sundown, you can't stop at every tavern.

You start the game of life with a full pot of luck and an empty pot of experience. The object is to fill the pot of experience before you empty the pot of luck.

There are two types of people in this world; people who ride motorcycles and people who wish they could.

### **CLUB HATS AND T SHIRTS**

Prices are as follows:

Hats \$13.50 each

Short sleeve tee's \$12

Long sleeve tee's \$14

I must have a minimum order to proceed, minimum orders are 6 for T-shirts and 12 for hats.

If any one has any suggestions for other types of clothing items you can check out the following web sites and get in touch with me.

The following web sites are sources to our supplier, feel free to troll them for ideas:

<http://www.stormtech.ca>      <http://www.sanmarcanada.com>

I have had one request for long sleeved fleece pullovers with club logo embroidered on left breast.

**Conrad Moller** [conrad@jacktar.ca](mailto:conrad@jacktar.ca) H: 250-479-1730 M: 250-889-2716

**Submitted by Geoff Stevenson**

## ROADS I HAVE RIDDEN

By Vince Martorino

### LETS RIDE SOUTH 2008 DAY 6

We started the day by riding on to the Bonneville Salt Flats which are very flat and White. A part of the Great Basin area. This was the week of Motorcycle time racing but with the wind blowing not much was happening. It was still worth the trip and to ride on the salt flats which was one of my "look forward toos". We carried on 93a south to 93 and over a few passes which only seem like a slight hill at 6,025 & Connor pass at 7,723 to the town of Baker on HWY 21. At one long point the road stayed straight for about 50 K with out a turn bend or rise. At Baker you have access to Wheeler Park with a road up the mountain to 10,716ft with a wide view of part of the Great Basin (a story on its own) More plains travel on Hwy 21 & at the junction of 257 .not shown on any large map, ( found it on my Rand McNally 1995 map - ed) we turned right.went through the narrow Parowan Gap then twisted through a narrow canyon and crossed Interstate 15 to Parowan. After a little sight seeing ride around town we headed east on 143 with more turns all the way up the canyon through Cedar Breaks Park which peaked at a ski resort of 11,500 ft. Still heading east and down the other side on another road past lakes, forests & meadow with more great turns all the way and ridden at about 85 KPH for great leaning. Now left at 89 to the town of Panguitch for the night .OD 90885



Photos by Vince Martorino

## CONCERNING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

from Bob Leach

1. We need to select a date that does not conflict with ongoing rallies.
2. We need a rendezvous place i.e. pub, hall etc. Any thoughts???
3. Time of event--night or day, weekend what day?
4. Commemorative t-shirts and/or sweatshirts.
5. Public relations with other clubs, newspaper articles, Canadian biker etc.
6. Someone mentioned redoing the club patch.
7. A one time donation to a suitable charity.
8. A ride of some significance i.e. overnighiter, when, where, how long?
9. Dealer and BMW of Canada involvement.
10. Any other thoughts?

These are just some ideas that Don Robertson and I would like to throw out to the members for feedback. They can use my email address - [jkrleach@shaw.ca](mailto:jkrleach@shaw.ca)

## WANTED A FEW GOOD VOLUNTEERS

Do you have an interesting route to ride or a special restaurant the Club should visit? We are looking for volunteers to provide variety to our ride calendar. Volunteering requires a little time to coordinate the event. Here's what is involved. For a breakfast meeting, it is a matter of contacting the restaurant (we are always amenable to changes) and making a reservation with approximate numbers and times. For a ride there is a little more work, but not much. In addition to the restaurant reservations, you will need to select a meeting place for the start and plan a route. You can get lots of ideas by talking to club members at our breakfast meetings. The club also has a copy of Destination Highways BC, which can provide ideas. If you are willing to give it a try, Please contact **Bob Leitch** by email ( [bleitch@telus.net](mailto:bleitch@telus.net) ) or phone 250-656-6694.

## FOR SALE

A Widder, electric thermostat controller with a BMW plug. This item is good with Widder electric clothing. I paid a \$168 new and would like to get \$60 for it.

**Bob Leach** phone number 250-477-1099 or cell at 250-892-1099.

## BEE CEE BEEMERS 8th Hotsprings Rally August 13 -16, 2009

2009 Annual Bee Cee Beemers NAKUSP Hotsprings Rally

Contact person: **RANDY BELL** (604) 657-0840 or send emails to: [rally@beecebeemers.com](mailto:rally@beecebeemers.com)

Date: August 13 - August 16 Time: Starts around 3pm

Location Nakusp Municipal Campground 314 8th Ave. NW Nakusp, B.C. Canada

GPS: N50 14.429, W117 47.725

Looking for a great riding destination this summer? Hotsprings Rally is just for you! Come join us for an old fashioned Beemer rally and experience some of the finest motorcycling roads on the continent.

Pre-registration is US\$55 & CDN\$60 per person, which includes 3 nights camping, 3 catered suppers, buckets of Kicking Horse coffee, home baked muffins in the morning and a rally pin. If you are not camping Shorter visit you'll pay less. FOR MORE INFORMATION Please visit our website: [BEECEEBEEMERS.COM](http://BEECEEBEEMERS.COM)

## CHIEF JOSEPH RALLY

The BMW Riders of Oregon annual Chief Joseph Rally will be held again this year on June 18 - 21, 2009 at the John Day, Oregon Fairgrounds. This is our tenth year at this great site. There are many exciting things to do and places to see along with great motorcycle roads to get you there.

Our new secure online registration process or snail mail registration form can be found at our website at [www.bmwro.org](http://www.bmwro.org). **Liz Jones** Registrar

## CASCADE RENDEZVOUS

## REPUBLIC WASHINGTON

## JULY 23 - 26

Registration before July 1<sup>st</sup> is \$40.00. On-site is \$45.00 Includes 3 nights camping, dinner Friday & Saturday, coffee & refreshments, vendors, cash bar.

For information & to pre-register visit [www.wsbmwr.org](http://www.wsbmwr.org) or phone 509-738-6959 or e-mail [rally@wsbmwr.org](mailto:rally@wsbmwr.org)



**THIS LIST ENABLES YOU TO:** submit articles or ideas for future issues of Beemer Reader, pay your dues of \$15, order club clothing, and borrow books and DVD's.

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## CLUB RIDE SCHEDULE 2009

[www.bmwrv.org](http://www.bmwrv.org) [bmwrv@shaw.ca](mailto:bmwrv@shaw.ca)

Date	Event	Location	Type	Organizer
May 2 Saturday	Monthly Gathering	Olympic View Golf Course	Breakfast	Volunteer needed
May 16 Saturday	Monthly Ride	Saltaire Pub	Road	Don Robertson
May 22 - 24 TBConfirmed	49er Rally	Auburn, California	Rally	Volunteer needed
May 24 Sunday	Ride for Dad	Victoria	Charity Event	Bob Leitch
Jun 7 Sunday	Monthly Gathering	Pioneer House	Breakfast	Volunteer needed
Jun 20 – 21 Saturday/Sunday	Camp-n-Ride	Gold River	Road	Tom Thornton
Jun 18 – 21 Thursday/Sunday	Chief Joseph Rally	John Day, Oregon	Rally	Volunteer needed
Jul 4 Saturday	Monthly Gathering	Dakota Restaurant	Breakfast	Volunteer needed
Jul 16 - 19 Thursday/Sunday	BMWOA National Rally	Johnson City, Tennessee	Rally	Volunteer needed
Jul 19 Sunday	Monthly Ride	Port Renfrew	Road	Volunteer needed
Jul 23 – 26 Thursday/Sunday	Cascade Rendezvous	Republic, Washington	Rally	Klaus Kreye
Aug 9 Sunday	Monthly Gathering	Salt Spring Island	Breakfast	Brian Radford
Aug 14 - 17	Hotsprings Rally	Nakusp, BC	Rally	Volunteer needed
Aug 22 Saturday	Ride up Island	Qualicum Beach	Road	Tom Thornton
Sep 12 Saturday	Monthly Gathering	Chequered Flag	Breakfast	Klaus Kreye