



**Editor’s Ramblings**

*by Gary Shanafelt*

Did anyone see July go by? Even as action packed as the month was, it happened so fast I almost missed it. On the way to the MOA Rally I did take a detour to Deal’s Gap and found everything written about “The Dragon” to be true but not much has been said about the beautiful ride along the North Carolina side of the Great Smokey Mountain National Park. Try it.

Johnson City, TN served as great hosts for the MOA Rally. Yea, there were a few warts but generally the MOA did a great job of organizing. Having been a part of several large events I can say with authority that the MOA did a lot of things right. A brief, incomplete Rally Recap is provided for your entertainment as is a summary of Helen Two-Wheels’ philosophy on Riding Alone. Next month I hope to shame some of the other attendees in to documenting their adventures at the Rally.

Last month we had to say goodbye to our friend and riding companion, Archie “Pat” Patterson who was sort of quiet but he a “Get-‘er-Done!” sort of guy. Pat is going to be missed around here

Our Pres gets a free pass this month on his “President’s Corner” but we will be anticipating what he has to say at Sunday’s meeting.

V.R.

**Gary Shanafelt**



Die Famile Logan. Kerry and Jen finally got it right. Kendra Logan has already been enrolled in the first MSF class of 2025. *(I didn’t have the heart to tell the proud parents that these babies grow up to be teenagers.)*

- Up-Coming Events:  
 02 Aug-BMWMCHR **Monthly Meeting** 8am for chow, 9am for meeting. Ride to follow!  
 02 Aug-Portsmouth Court House Gallery  
**Kids Day** 11am-5pm  
 08 Aug-Portsmouth Court House Gallery  
**Sports Bike Show** Register 10-12; Show 12-5pm  
 22 Aug-Portsmouth Court House Gallery  
**Trike and Sidecar Show** Register 10-12; Show 12-5pm
- (Polish up your classic: 26 Sep- Gallery Antique Bike Show)*

## MOA Rally Recap

*by Gary Shanafelt*

The BMW Rally in Johnson City, TN had about 7000 bikes and almost all of them were “Beamers”. The oldest rider was 91 who rode in with his wife from Ohio (I think) while I barely made it from Virginia, one state away! Everywhere you looked there were lots of beautiful Beamers and I realized I better either clean mine up or put it in the garage and only ride it at night.

Of course, nothing happens when I have my camera on me but the day I left it in the hotel turned out to be a little exciting. They had a motocross track set up at the Rally and I watched some poor goober get too much air under a really nice Dakar, let his nose drop, and smashed in head first at about 35 degrees nose low. After a long time, he finally got up and rode back stringing motorcycle parts on the track all the way back to the pit area. I started to cry with the thought of that beautiful Dakar limping back home.

BMW-USA, the big corporate sponsor, had demo bikes available for rides and I witnessed some young lady bring one of their new touring bikes back from a ride and drop it just like “Artie Johnson” on Laugh In. But she was very attractive and, as you know, those girls live by different rules than the rest of us so the BMW rep told her not to worry about it.

With so many bikes coming and going, parking near the exhibits was at a premium. I parked my bike a fair distance off where there was a lot of room. Much closer to the activities, several hundred bikes were parked side-by-side very close together and some were on a slope not favorable to putting your bike on the side-stand. Some poor guy was trying to squeeze his bike into a parking space, bumped the bike next to him, and knocked over SEVEN motorcycles. It would have been even worse but some lady saw what was happening and stopped the last bike from falling. Her quick thinking probably saved about 10 motorcycles. After helping pick up the fallen bikes, I was amazed at the amount of damage as almost all of them had mirrors and

lights broken off and damage to the fairings. At least two of the bikes were not ride-able because the brakes and clutch levers were broken off. I know the culprit felt terrible and immediately started writing his name and phone number for each bike. He also stayed around and spoke with the police. All of a sudden, the distance I had to walk back to my bike did not seem as formidable. (Cont)



Pat said his plan is to ride this borrowed Harley to Michigan while his wife Ann drives the family van towing their trailer. I understand this decision is being revisited.

## MOA Rally Recap (Cont)

Vintage motorcycle legend, Craig Vechorik hosted one seminar by fielding questions on challenges facing attendees trying to patch back together an old bike. Violating Rule #1, I asked Vech a question about my '84 RS. He laughed and said he didn't know much about the "newer bikes" but he did answer my question and I was only mildly embarrassed. Craig's wife, Elaine was in the back of the room and by her interjections it was clear that she packed a pretty impressive portfolio of vintage BMW information as well. They both seemed like people that would be fun to know and hang around with.

Paul Galves and Tom Cutter, both well published in BMW technically oriented periodicals; hosted very interesting seminars on care and feeding of your basic Airhead. I'll pass some of their information on in later newsletters.

Being a C-student in the School of Business, I felt I should at least try and find out something technical about my GS so I attended a seminar on the infamous BMW Controller Area Network (CANBus) electrical system. Except for learning what the acronym stands for, I truly know less about the system than I did before I went to Johnson City. The newer BMWs have over 300 watts of surplus power available but trying to exploit it is not a trivial problem. You can always hook directly to the battery but if you want access to the extra juice through a "switched" port, you better talk to seminar host John Swiatek of Powerlet Corp (<http://www.powerletproducts.com/learningCenter/welcome-bmw-owners>) My degree in Accounting just isn't going to cut it for you.

I also begged my way in to the "Seasoned Rider's Course" but was shocked to discover the MOA sponsored course was not for me at all but was directed toward the older rider ... but I stayed anyway since I was already there. More about this course later but suffice it to say, if you intend to ride after you get your Medicare Card, you might want to stop by and talk to some of

the older guys and gals about how they deal with the effects of aging. I certainly learned a lot that I can use in later years ☺.

Next year's Rally will be held in central Oregon and I'm already trying to make it sound like attending was my wife's idea. —GS



It has been said that Bob couldn't find it with both hands and a flashlight but Bob might find it a little easier now that it is well signposted!

## Helen Two-Wheels; Traveling Alone

by Gary Shanafelt

The most entertaining seminar speaker at the Rally had to be Helen “Two-Wheels”, speaking in her earthy vernacular, addressing the rewards and challenges of traveling alone. Helen feels riding with a partner or in a group puts unneeded stress on your ride and the only thing you can concentrate on is someone else’s butt. While riding alone, you set the pace, the style, the speed, and the comfort stops. There are times when you ride and you are not ready to quit after 800 miles; other times you are “toast” after 200 but riding alone, you get to make the decisions based upon your temperament and not obligated to consider or respond to someone else’s. Helen touts that preparation is the key relieving any fear of being out in the big bad world alone and offers a few suggestions to any single rider. First, put your cell phone somewhere on your body where you can reach it. Your cell phone will not do you any good if you are lying in a pool of your own body fluids and your cell phone is in the tank bag at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.



Out of the 70 or so people attending the seminar, no one had a good word to say about any of the motorcycle

towing services. Helen feels it is worse to expect help from those extortionists and not get it than to rely upon other alternatives. The *Anonymous Book* is your life-line to likeminded people who will know and understand your predicament and becomes Helen’s second recommended travel-alone must have. (OBTW- if anyone has anything positive about towing services, please let me know. From what I have heard, I am struggling to appreciate their value.) Helen did recommend subscribing to Med-Jet Assist ([www.medjetassist.com](http://www.medjetassist.com))

The third must-have item is an “I.C.E.” card and I had no idea what Helen was talking about until it became obvious she was talking about a card in your wallet with critical information about you and whom should be called In Case of Emergency but Helen also had a few recommendations about which I had not thought. Somewhere on the ICE card, put a small picture of you and/or your family as it will humanize you to the caregivers. Otherwise you might appear to be just another idiot biker that dumped his “murdercycle” like the three Harley-bubbas that were in the ER last week. In addition to contact information, include your blood type and any medications you might be taking. Helen has also designed a zipper pull for your jacket that has your contact information engraved on it. Oh yes, if you normally ride with your spouse, don’t put her or his name down as your I.C.E. contact person. The fourth must-have item is a credit card (sounds obvious) and Helen’s final suggested item to have if you are traveling alone is “knowledge” particularly about your machine. Helen said she was quite aware that she was a member of the fairer sex but she is getting really tired of fixing “guy’s” motorcycles on the road and recommends as a way to get to know your motorcycle that you do the simple maintenance on your bike yourself. Helen shared a vignette about the time her son substituted a broken throttle cable with the Low-E string from his guitar. –GS