

# die Zeitung

BMW Motorcycle Club of Hampton Roads  
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**MAY-JUN 10**  
**Special Edition**

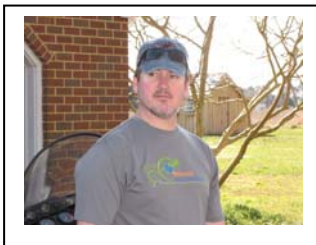
## Cabin Fever Breakfast and Ride

*by Gary Shanafelt*

Dan and Donna Franken set the party standards for the club and this year's annual Cabin Fever ride was no exception. About 15 of the Club's finest met at Dan and Donna's for a really great breakfast buffet. While Dan was busy being the consummate host, Donna and her two elves, Brenda Martin and Wendy Tyer, kept piling our plates full.



About 10am Ride Coordinator Scott Overton led us through the spring-time blessed back roads of North Carolina to Elizabeth City where we took a coffee break at the Muddy Waters Coffee House. If you are in the area, I highly recommend stopping at Muddy's if for nothing more than the ambiance.



You have probably noticed pictures of scenes "painted" in cream atop a hot cup of cappuccino but at Muddy's you will get the real deal. The girl on the right of this photo

is a nationally ranked barista with the talent and fine motor skills to paint just about anything...if she has time.



At Elizabeth city a couple members had to break off from such an honored riding group but the remainder of us rode on down to Plymouth, NC stopping at the Port O'Plymouth Civil War Museum on the Roanoke River waterfront. If you are in the area, the Port O'Plymouth Museum is another MUST SEE stop. Though it appears small from the outside, the inside is crammed full of really neat stuff. A elderly but enthusiastic curator can entertain wide-eyed tourist as long as they will listen.

From Plymouth we all sort of scattered to find our own way home but not without pausing to thank Dan, Donna, and the elves, for another great day.



## **FRESH HALIBUT (PART TWO) PLANNING, CROSSING USA, FERRY TO ALASKA**

*by Dan Franken*

**Prep and planning:** As winter progressed and our AK trip planning got serious, Craig and I agreed that we would individually pack for "independent operations." We each carried small gas-powered stoves, cook sets, tent, pad, sleeping bag, water supply, and other camp gear. My thirty year old tent had become a leaker, so I splurged for a new Sierra Design model, and bought a down-filled bag for this trip. (Craig is a many year veteran of ocean kayaking and island camping off Vancouver, and prefers synthetic sleeping bags to down-filled ones, having been wet several times too many, while I love the comfort of down filled bags.) The choice proved to be a non-issue, as our tents stayed dry during numerous rain showers. My new tent is two-person sized, while Craig took a one-man model... as one trip lesson learned, it turned out that having the extra space in the larger tent was worth the additional bulk and weight, simply for stowing gear in a rain storm.

**Clothing and gear:** We studied the weather patterns and agreed that getting too warm would not be an issue. Our prognostications showed daily temps ranging from the high 30's, to possibly the upper 60's, with rain nearly a daily event in most places of the Northwest Territory and the Alaska mainland. The dictum which served us well for our adventure was to be "layered and wired." Here, the virtue of synthetic gear would really prove itself. And again, from his camping experience, it was clear that my buddy packed the wisest. Having extra space to carry lots of stuff, I did - way too much. Craig: several undergarment options and several items of fleece/synthetic upper body wear. Then, perhaps one pair of blue

jeans, and a shirt or two. Me, all the above plus enough additional casual clothes to attend college for a semester! (Funny how you get to hate gear you carry along but don't use.) Another lesson (re)learned : For a motorcycle trip, take motorcycle clothes only, and let that be it. For being easy to live with, the synthetics beat cotton hands down. We each wore Gore-Tex two piece riding suits. I also wore an old electric vest (it was barely enough), and Craig, a new electric-fired jacket liner. Hot! He, Gore-Tex gloves and boots; me, rain covers for both my boots, and gloves. Advantage, Craig.



**The Machines:** It wasn't difficult to choose my 1150 GS for this endeavor, though I did consider my FJR1300, as it would really be a treat to take cross-country on the major US west/east legs...but the GS is simply too off-road utilitarian, comfy, and reliable, so it was my pick. No regrets on that decision - especially during many rain showers, several hail storms, and slushy gravel roads for hours on end in the Yukon Territory. Craig is a very experienced rider who has owned many machines including several BMWs, and currently rides a K1200LT. For this trip, he wanted a dual purpose machine, but having never owned one, he opted for a new KLR 650 Kawasaki. That turned out to be a good choice. He purchased the machine

during early 2009, knocked out a quick 1000 winter miles, had the requisite oil change and checkup, and reported that he was ready to go. Except for the addition of a neat set of aftermarket aluminum panniers, the Kawasaki was stock. I readied my GS with new tires, a complete change of all fluids; new battery, air filter, set the valves, and concentrated on a "what if" pre-ride assessment. What could likely break, what should I take along? So in addition to a usual lot of BMW tools, I added to my canvas tool bag: extra electrical wire, electrical tape, fuses, stainless steel wire, a length of spare fuel hose, new stainless steel fuel-line quick-disconnect fittings, a new/spare alternator belt, an electrical continuity tester, two tire plug kits and extra bottles, and various fasteners. Since I never needed any of these items, I've concluded that I selected exactly the right stuff! When I asked Craig about his pre-trip planning, what he took along in addition to his machine's original tool kit, he replied, "You!"

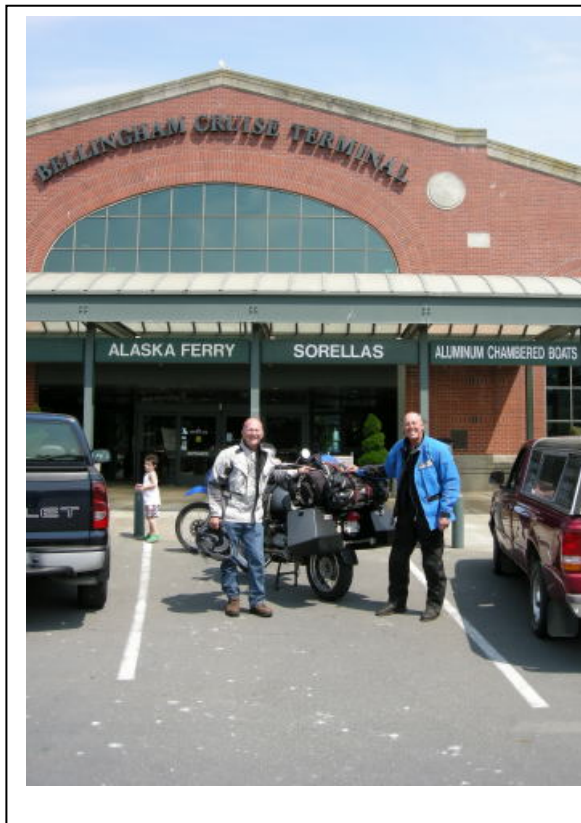
**West across USA, and the Alaska ferry ride:** Leaving Pungo about 0600, my visor fogged up in the early morning chill, though I knew this Memorial Day 2009 was going to be a good riding day. No traffic out and about this Saturday morning, and the machine would not trip several lights...a charge into a burst of six hundred mile days and two hotel stays later, and soon I was in *the west*, where the camping and scenery is awesome. Bucking the proverbial west/southwest wind, the BMW churned out the power, decent mileage, and kept performing well beyond my wear limits! Once into the western mid-plains, I throttled back and set about camping and living outdoors. Great stopover spots found along the way included: (1) Niobrara state park, northeastern Nebraska: not busy, absolutely beautiful environment, camping sites high



on bluffs covered with native prairie grass, overlooking the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri rivers. Wake up to the sounds of songbirds, pheasants and turkeys, and watch deer saunter across your camp. Little/no nearby shopping, so take your food in with you to this one. (2) Chadron State Park, in northwest Nebraska. Great sites and facilities, very scenic part of the western plains, more ranch than farm country, close to nearby town of Chadron, an overall great place to stop. (3) The KOA at Billings MT. Yes, a KOA - right on the banks of the Yellowstone river, on the edge of Billings. All the usual amenities of a KOA, plus the city of Billings a ten minute ride away...but the best part was a grass covered tent site right on the bank of the river. A few more bucks than most other camps, but well worth it. I purposely stayed here again on my way back east, several weeks later.



That next day I made the run to Missoula just fine, though I always get wet on that stretch. Missoula, warm up, motel, rest. Next day, Lolo pass, Moscow, Craig and Karin's house, for two nights R&R. We are getting set, we are pumped...we have reservations for the ferry at Bellingham, WA, to check in nlt 1500 on 5 June, for an 1800 departure. On the 3rd, we completed final preps for our trip, while I also knocked out an early oil change on the BMW in order to avoid one during the trip. Early morning the 4th we were underway, taking rural back roads of Washington state. Beautiful, curvy, sunny...north towards Twisp and Winthrop, Hwy 20 and the passes over the Cascades -



the road only recently opened for travel. Ice and snow still in abundance, the temps diving as we are climbing, the melting snow causing rain showers on the highway's passes...then back down again, warm again, to an overnight campsite right on the banks of the Skagit river, on the edge of Rockport WA. Probably the most beautiful campsite of the entire trip (a county park as I recall). Clean, luxurious, hot showers, economical, and a bar and grocery within walking distance of the campground. We are within striking distance of Bellingham, we are effectively, *there*.



**The Alaskan Ferry - inward passage.** For those unfamiliar (this included me), the state of Alaska runs a ferry system just like Hampton Roads runs its HRT (except the ferries actually carry a lot of people, and are often full). This labyrinth of routes connects all the major Alaskan cities and regions, and state. Many travelers and Alaska "commuters" take the ferry up and back for whatever purpose, rather than the highway system across the Canadian territories, British Columbia, Alberta, Yukon, etc. Our ferry was the MV COLUMBIA, about five hundred feet in length, twin diesel powered, older, and comfortable, and well run. (Ferry info: Google Alaska state ferry, or call 800-642-0066).



Ah, the ferry! A trip within our trip - a trip of a lifetime. Comfortable, exciting, beautiful sights, a continuous stream of incredible scenery off port or starboard sides, for two full days and three nights. Dark the first night, barely so the next, and light all the time thereafter. Small (when compared to cruise ships), comfy, informal, and with an interesting body of passengers, the ferry was a blast. One has several choices for how to live for this voyage: (1) a cabin (2) a tent, pitched somewhere aft on a covered deck or uncovered one on the fantail, or, (3) hang out and sleep where you can. Observation deck up forward, movie theater, you name it. I don't know if the latter is an advertised ferry method, but just one that was observed. The passengers were very diverse: Grandparents enroute up to see family or grandchildren, campers /vacationers, seasonal workers, motorcyclists, and more. The ferry was conducive to meeting all types of interesting people, so that and the incredible beauty of the passage made for a wonderful trip.

We stopped briefly at several ports and at Ketchikan stayed long enough to go ashore for lunch and some quick shopping. (Here, fish and chips is really good, cause its Halibut!!) Our original tickets were to Juneau, where we disembarked for a one



night stay (cold, rainy, couldn't wait to get moving)...that next day we went up to Skagway, again via ferry, and from then on, we were into Alaska, the Yukon territory, and on up to intercept the ALCAN highway. (More on that in Part 3.)

Information for anyone planning such a trip: our fare came out to nearly a thousand dollars each, but that included about three hundred for a cabin (an "outside" one - portholes to view from), and several



hundred dollars for each motorcycle. The ship's lower decks were packed with RVs, cars, trucks, motorcycles, and yes, many live pets living down below. Frequent breaks are permitted for feeding and other chores. In short, for anyone planning an Alaska trip, taking the ferry, up or down, would be a very great choice.

Several trip lessons learned (more in part 3): I planned to make the entire trip on one set of new tires. Perhaps I could have, but prudence won out, and on the way home, I swapped out the rear tire at the BMW dealer In Missoula, MT. Craig's machine wore the OEM knobby tires, and he changed those

out after only several thousand miles, putting on a set of Avon's multipurpose tread tires at a cycle shop in Fairbanks. As many know, the northwest highways are harder on tires than we are accustomed to here (I'd venture to say 30% less wear than on average), and stems from general roughness, and the rock texture of the road surfaces. So, planning for tires is an issue, but I would not recommend carrying them with you - too much bother- plan to swap them out enroute at major destinations. Neither of us had any mechanical malfunction whatsoever. Neither required the addition of any engine oil! We ran our machines between 60-75 mph, conditions depending, and averaged at least 45-55mpg (most all on non-ethanol gas). Our mileage data was usually within several miles per gallon for each machine. The GS hauling more gear, the KLR humming along at 1500 RPM greater than the BMW. We soon developed the procedure of fueling at the first opportunity when nearing a half tank of fuel. Particularly in YK or BC, many official road signs would say: Fuel/Services 35KM. Sure enough, you would reach that point to find a closed, boarded up service station - this was frequent. Get fuel when you can.

We deliberately did not plan to drive at night. Once we stopped for a camp or hotel, the machines stayed put. The one evening we did drive late almost cost us. Coming "back down," late in our trip, we entered Montana at the US border south of Coutts, AB. From there we hauled down I-15, heading for scenic Hwy-200 - it connects Great Falls and Missoula. Well, as we headed west on Hwy-200, darkness, dampness, and cold came up to make it interesting...Craig was in the lead as we scooted through the mountain passes near the continental divide...it was almost dark, effectively dark when up ahead, rounding a

sharp curve, before the next sharp curve, a veritable herd of deer were standing in the road. Just as I got on my binders, I saw Craig's taillight illuminate, his bike's rear end sway a bit, then I heard the screeching of his tires - which, incidentally was the catalyst that stirred the deer to act - they ran away like crazy, leaping over the stone wall of the curve! Whew, leaves your knees weak. We made it to Missoula, several hours later, checking in to the Best Western on the north end of the city, and then enjoyed a beer. (Oh by the way, the best free breakfast ever, at any hotel, is there, no kidding.) Driving at night? Sort of like flying at night - hard, and dangerous.

**-Dan**

## The City Dinner-Richmond

by Gary Shanafelt

If you have not stopped for lunch at the City Dinner in Richmond, you are in for a real treat. Don't be intimidated by the pedagogic older lady watching the till when you enter. She looks and sounds ferocious but hasn't actually bitten anyone in several weeks. More importantly, the waitresses are lively and obviously love their customers. Take your time ordering because you are about to contract for A LOT of food. I visited the City Dinner on Easter Sunday for lunch and since I plan to have my cholesterol checked in about six months, decided to forgo my usual Ruben sandwich and opted for the (1250 calorie) club salad. Regardless of what you order, I am begging you to not eat it all until you can find out what the desert special is for that day. All their deserts are great but on Thursdays they often have banana pudding and don't expect a wimpy little bowl of pudding when you order either. Their banana pudding is served in an old fashioned malt glass piled to the top with the best pudding you have ever tasted. Go ahead, order two if you dare!



The City Dinner is located at 2237 W. Broad St.; directly across the street from Pleasants Hardware. What a great way to walk off a few pounds after lunch by checking out the tools and equipment at PH. I'm sure your wife will understand ☺



🎵 I-LOVE A PARADE 🎵

Each Easter the city of Richmond blocks off Monument Avenue for a parade and you can be in it. Just show up about 1pm wearing your Easter bonnet...with all the thrills upon it.