

MAY 2023

# NORCAL NEWS



Ride to Camp

Camp to Ride



**BMW MOTORCYCLE CLUB OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

The 49er is just around the corner, and the team is working hard to bring another outstanding rally to our members and guests this Memorial Day weekend. I am confident all those who attend will have a great time with some different things planned this year to keep it fresh. So don't miss out on what will be a great time. If you have never been to a rally, don't worry, as we have a first-timers' reception on Thursday. You will surely meet many new friends as our attendees are happy to be some of the friendliest people you will meet.

Our SongDog campout was a huge hit and well attended, and all that rode were treated to spectacular riding over the weekend with super blooms all around. The weather was outstanding, and the food was just as good. We don't always provide catered meals, but it's always top-notch when we do.

We had 12 members attend training at the BMW Rider's Academy in South Carolina where they received on and off-road training and a guided tour around the area. They also took a hot lap in an M3 around the test track as a bonus. We were able to offer a very significant discount off the rack rate thanks to our relationship with BMW of San Jose. That, combined with the ability to apply for a Paul B grant, made the training a very nicely priced three days on any BMW motorcycle you wanted. It was a great event, and we are looking to do it again soon.

I want to remind everyone that after the 49er is the June Election meeting, as we have several positions up for election this year, including the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Tour Captain. All the retiring board members will be available to transition their responsibilities and mentor new board members fully, so don't be nervous about stepping up. The club has significant momentum, and fresh perspectives on the Board will keep it going. Don't hesitate to get in touch with me or any of the other Board members for info and details about the positions and responsibilities. I am excited to attend Uncle Tom's Cabin for the June Election meeting. We have been trying to have a campout there for a few years, but fires kept us away. This year we traded that problem for an overabundance of snow. We will be roasting a pig at the campout and planning to have a band at the Cabin. Signups will open later in May.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the 49er. Until then, Stay Safe

*Kevin Coleman President*

I think we have a pretty amazing newsletter this month primarily thanks to Delf Hedde. Delf sent me his article on travel to Mexico last month, but last month was so packed it wouldn't fit so I held it over. This month on his return from the club trip to the BMW Riders Academy in North Carolina he sent a second article describing what when on. I like where possible to keep the newsletter current so it went in this month, and this month has two contributions from Delf.

The Mexico write-up in my mind is the most comprehensive I have read. If anyone is planning a trip to Mexico at any time in the future, they should keep a copy of Delf's tract to review before setting off. Delf also organized the Riders Academy trip for club members. Twelve lucky participants attended; all places filled within 48 hours of the initial announcement. From the participants feedback at the Songdog campout it was a total success, with plaudits to Delf for his organization efforts. Reading Delf's account it is clear to me that if a similar trip is organized next year, it will also be fully subscribed, next time in 24 hours.

The club also organized two events in April, the first being the SSB in Petaluma. I attended and took pictures, but Tresha Holloway, our tour captain, who participated in the ride after breakfast, provided an event write up. The campout this month was held at Songdog Ranch in Maricopa. Due to all the rain this year the environment was no longer a semi-desert, but filled with an abundance of wildflowers. This unusual environment inspired our club photographers. I would like to thank the following for sending in their pictures.

- Harry Bahlman
- Tom Short
- Ravi Verma
- Manny Rubio
- John Parodi

May is 49er month, and is back in Mariposa. As always there is a large number of activities. Just remember, providing pictures and/or a write up for the newsletter is a great way of sharing your experience with others.

*John Ellis*

## JUNE MEMBER MEETING AND CAMPOUT - ELECTION MEETING

The 2023 election meeting will be held on 24 June 2023 at the June campsite - Uncle Tom's Cabin, 15630 Wentworth Springs Road, Georgetown, CA 95634

The positions of Vice President, Tour Captain, and Safety Director are all up for a full 2 year terms. The president position is also up for election but the term will be for 1 year only. Please consider running for a position or nominating a fellow member.

If you require more information contact a current board member

**49er Rally**  
The 51<sup>st</sup> year of the best rally in the west

Mariposa County Fairgrounds  
May 25<sup>th</sup> to May 29<sup>th</sup>

Register today at [www.BMWnorcal.org](http://www.BMWnorcal.org)

GS Challenge • Rawhyde Training • Skills Courses • Street Training  
Hot showers • Seminars • Self Guided Rides • Food and Beverage  
Great camping • RV Parking • Poker Runs

BMW Club of Northern California

**BMW RIDERS OF OREGON INVITE YOU TO OUR 43RD ANNUAL CHIEF JOSEPH RALLY. JUNE 22-25**  
Details @ website; [www.BMWRO.org](http://www.BMWRO.org)

The 51th 49er will continue the tradition of the West's best rally, this year with the Club returning to the Mariposa County Fairgrounds in beautiful Mariposa.

You can look forward to four nights of grassy tent camping (or RV hookups if tents are not your thing) along with hot showers, cold beverages, live bands, a beer garden, great speakers and moto-centric vendor booths.

In addition we are bringing back our Saturday night dinner for all attendees this year which is included in your early bird registration

BMW NorCal believes in safety through continuous rider training. This year's Rally will offer several important programs

1. Rawhyde will run beginner and intermediate offroad training programs.
2. There will be street ride training by BeCrashFree

In addition there will be opportunity to test your rider skills in the English Trials, or step up to the next level with the GS Challenge

Visit the Club Store to pick up self-guided route directions (paper or GPX). Rever will have a challenge for you to complete, or do a Poker Run with increased cash prizes. Don't forgot to take pictures of your ride... there will be daily prizes for the best photos of the day posted to Facebook as voted by Rally attendees.

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**RUSS BROWN ATTORNEYS**  
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## YOU NEED MORE TRAINING!

Sure, everyone in this club is an excellent rider! And doing the same thing over and over again without accident is a clear indicator for excellence. Right?!

In fact, continuous training is a great way to stay sharp and keep up with the evolving technology that our bikes offer (Slipper clutch, Lean angle sensitive ABS, Traction Control, shift assist pro, ....). And learning new stuff is just pure fun!

Why not see what the folks with knobbies are raving about and try out a little dirt? Or take a road riding class and have an instructor help you finetuning your canyon carving techniques?

At this year's 49er we have two outstanding training organizations offering fun classes to help you improve your riding!

BeCrashFree will be providing two sessions of their road training program on Saturday May 27.

The training program is built around a 4-hour loop that will go from 1000' to over 6000'. We will ride through Arch Rock and enjoy views of El Capitan and many other beautiful Yosemite vistas throughout the national park highway system. Towards the end of the ride, we will experience Wicked Hairpin and climb over 1000' in less than 3 miles. During the whole four hours, you will have the opportunity to be coached at a 3:1 student/teacher

ratio, providing you with techniques on line selection, braking, cornering, throttle application, and if interested, body position.

The signup for these classes is handled by BeCrashFree. After [signing up for the 49er Rally](#) head over to [BeCrashFree](#) to register for your road class.

Rawhyde is bringing their outstanding training curriculum to the 49er and offering two classes each day, a beginner/intermediate course suitable for riders with no off-road experience or minimal training who want to learn the skills necessary to ride in the dirt, as well as an intermediate/advanced course that is best for those that already know the basics and want to continue their development and build greater confidence as well as learn new skills to help you in more challenging areas.

You can sign up for the RawHyde classes on the 49er website.

**The cost for Be Crash Free Road Training is a now a bargain \$295.**

Please remember the [Paul Bachorz Rider Safety Training Grant](#) (<https://www.bmwmoa.org/page/paulb>) from the MOA Foundation. MOA members can request up to \$250 to defray the training cost (and I am not aware of any grant applications that ever have been denied).

Not an MOA member? The MOA offers one year of free membership to new members (<https://airtable.com/shrPT7yA9hWiUM9XV>) code 50YRSON .

*Delf Hedde Safety Director*



# THE NORCAL CLUB AT THE THE BMW US RIDER ACADEMY

In the April 2021 issue of this newsletter, I wrote about my first trip to the Us Rider Academy at the BMW Performance Center in Spartanburg, South Carolina. I liked it so much, that I could not wait to go back.

Late last year, I finally got the opportunity to organize a trip for the club. While a day of training at the Academy usually runs around \$900, with the support of BMW San Jose, the academy offered us a three-day package for less than \$500 per day and person. The only caveats: We had commit 12 people, and we needed to put the money down to reserve the dates.

The club took the risk and committed. Fortunately, we were able to fill the spots and recoup the cost within a very short time after putting the offer out to our members.

This is how twelve members of our club found themselves at the breakfast room in the Greenville Marriott at 6:30am on Easter Monday.

- The Greenville Marriott, because they offer a great deal (discounted room rate, breakfast included, free shuttle service to the airport, the performance center, and the town, as well as drink coupons
- Easter Monday, because even though we book the training in December, it was already late for the popular spring dates (Nobody wants to be in South Carolina in the heat of summer – not even the locals)
- 6:30am because our trip organizer had neglected to book the hotel shuttles far enough in advance: Even though it was only a ten-minute ride, the only way to get all of us to the Academy by 8:00am was to take the 7:00am shuttle.

At the Academy, we were met by our outstanding group of instructors: MackKenzie (five time national motocross champion), Wendy (probably familiar to many for her participation in the Wyoming BDR video), Richie (ex motocross champion), Ricardo (Moto Cop), and Jason (Paramedic), who are all BMW Motorrad certified Instructors.

Yes, five full time trainers, plus some support staff for twelve students. Not a bad ratio....

**DAY ONE** After a (very) short classroom introduction, we met the bikes theta we had reserved a couple of weeks before: pretty much all GS models from a lowered 750 to a bunch of 1250 GSAs.



After some fun warm up exercises, we went straight to perfecting the basics: slow speed maneuvering, tight circles, cones, cones, cones, then emergency braking practice.

Right after a great lunch, that was served at the Performance Center cafeteria, were offered a bonus activity: A hot lap and a couple of circles around the skid pad with a professional driver in a BMW M3. That was a treat!

After that, back to practicing basics braking and evasive maneuvers at ever increasing speeds.

Unfortunately, the full track was very busy with cars, so we didn't ride the bikes for any full, high-speed laps on the car track.



To end the day, we were given to try out a selection of BMW motorcycles, pretty much everything from the R1800, K-models, F-models to the R1250RS. Excluded were only the pure sport bikes (for those we would have to have booked the 2-day street survival class).

Back at the hotel, some of us decided to explore Greenville, while the rest decided to deal with sore muscles and jet-lag.

**DAY TWO** followed a very similar pattern: warm up exercises (this time in the dirt) and an intense focus on basics: slow speed





maneuvers, trail stops, ruts, camel humps. After lunch we went to the infamous gravel pit and then worked on emergency stops in the dirt. And in between all these exercises, we went for guided "enduro rides through the vast terrain of the performance center. Yes, a few bikes got very exhausted and insisted on taking naps....

At the end of day two we got our certificates for the One Day Street Survival and One Day Off Road Adventure classes, as well as the highly coveted BMW Performance Driving School baseball caps.

**DAY THREE** we put all the lessons together and went for an eight-hour ride on some of the best pavement and dirt that North and South-Carolina have to offer. As safety director, I am sad to report that neither the twelve NorCal riders, nor the 5 instructors showed the proper respect for the posted speed limits. As a participant in the ride, I can say that it was a ton of fun. About 50% of the ride was super curvy pavement, the other 50% were fun dirt roads. I am pretty sure that everyone had a great time.

I feel really privileged to have had the opportunity to do this training with this outstanding group of riders. They certainly did the club proud!

They also proved again, that it is the great riders, who seek more training. And it is training that makes great riders even better. It's always the folks that think they already know everything, that can't move forward.

It is also interesting, that even though this training was very focused on the basics (no secret tricks for the GS Trophy), everybody learned something. Some of the exercises we did, are very similar to the ones, I teach beginners in the Motorcycle Safety Class. But there is always something to perfect!

I would highly recommend the BMW Rider Academy to anyone interested in improving their skills. As I said two years ago: Everything about the courses is first class:

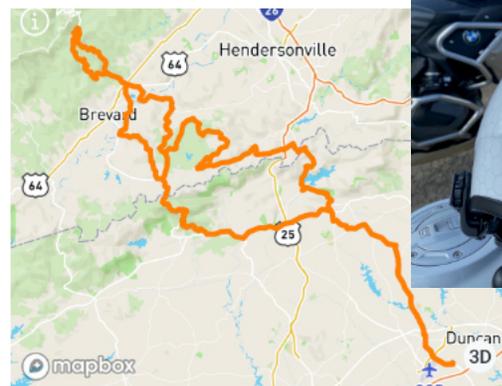
- An extremely well-structured curriculum with exercises building on each other
- Instructors that show a level of professionalism, enthusiasm, riding, and teaching skill, that is unmatched.
- Brand-new, well-maintained bikes that can be used and abused without any worry of financial consequences
- A truly world class, huge, purpose build facility to practice in

And keep in mind that financial assistance from the Paul B. Memorial Scholarship fund is available and easily obtainable.

I really hope that there will be a future trip of club members to South Carolina. If you are interested, let the board members know.

For those of you who can't wait, San Jose BMW has still spots available for a trip in September for GS Trophy Training and Off Road Training. If interested, contact Amy Hunter at San Jose BMW.

*Delf Hedde*  
Safety-Tech Director



# APRIL CAMPOUT AT SONGDOG

Fourteen atmospheric rivers, along with numerous storms, accompanied by record snowpack resulted in two canceled Norcal campouts as well as a last-minute relocation. It has left us with many roads closed due to flooding and rock falls, as well as the reemergence of a lake in the central valley, and the snow melt is just starting! However, the ride down Songdog, and the beauty of the campsite there, highlighted the benefits of all this rain. I rode down Hwy25 and then Hwy166 across San Rafael Mountain to Cuyama with green, yellow and purple blooms all the way. I have camped with the club at Songdog several times before where it always had the appearance of a dusty desert. This time I felt a bit bad as I pitched my tent on a carpet of yellow daisies. Check out some of the photos to get a feel for this extraordinary sight.

This campout was one of the best for some time, with around 80 persons in attendance, of which 65 stayed both Friday and Saturday. The club continues to attract new people and eight first-timers showed up to this campout. I wandered around with my camera in hand taking pictures of the attendees and the beautiful surroundings. I am pleased to report everyone seemed happy to comply with my requests and the result is a bunch of great pictures of people genuinely enjoying themselves and having lot of fun, which of course is the whole point

A catered dinner was served, which for me had the added

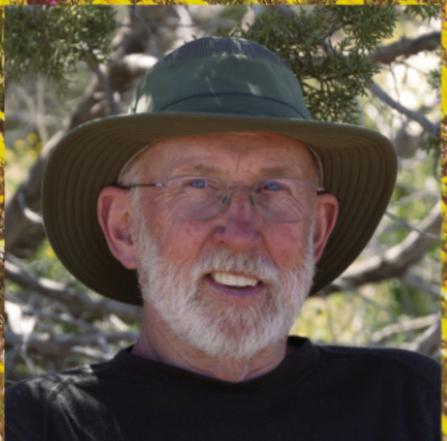
benefit of not requiring me to navigate the dirt track up to the campsite more than twice, having slid over on the way up. Big thanks to Dan Rowe for picking me up. I need to find something smaller or maybe something with 3 wheels.

Based on feedback from people who stayed on Friday night I was expecting a cold night and set up accordingly. However, Saturday night was warm, and the early morning walk breakfast was pleasant. After a pancake breakfast and copious amounts of hot coffee I set off home on Sunday morning leaving my down jacket in the bag. 10 miles down the road I realized my mistake, once again confused with California's micro climates.

Although the quickest way back home is Hwy5, this is a road I truly hate and wanted to avoid particularly after using it last month coming back from Death Valley. My alternative was Hwy 56/101. I think this was the first time I have ridden Hwy56 and was blown away with the road. The first half is technically challenging low speed bends, followed by a more open ride through high plains. Good surface and little traffic which for the most part obligingly pulled over to let me pass. Of course, everything was green and colorful. Great ride but make sure you fill up before you start as there is no gas enroute.

*John Ellis*







# APRIL SECOND SUNDAY BREAKFAST

What a perfect way to start off spring, the weather could not have been more perfect. We had about 18 people from all over the bay area show up in Petaluma for the SSB. It was around 8am and the riders started trickling in. We all hung out in the parking lot greeting friends and meeting new ones and of course admiring everyone's bikes. Around 8.30 we headed into Boulevard Cafe to fill our bellies. WOW, what a top notch establishment. We were all seated in the same area. After the first round of coffee the food orders started flowing in. The restaurant did a superb job of getting everyone's food out timely and correctly! The food was amazing, I dont think a clean plate went back. FYI The biscuits and Gravy were some of the best I've had. Great job Boulevard Cafe, we will be back!

After breakfast we mounted up and headed for the Coast. Darren Holloway led us from Petaluma out to Hwy 1. It was Easter so not too much traffic. The roads seem to be in perfect condition and you could see for miles up the coast line. We made our way up to Jenner where we had our first stop.

In Jenner we chatted for a bit and came up with B for a route. Some opted to head back into Santa Rosa as they had other obligations, some went up the coast further and some chose a more inland route.

At the end of the day everyone had a great time and made it home safely.

Thank you to everyone who came out.

*Tresha Holloway Tour Captain*



## Yes, it Really is closed



Dave Gluss and John Parodi rode Hwy25 south hoping to cross over to Lost Hills Friday on our way to Song Dog. Hwy 198 showed 'closed' on Google Maps, Coaling Road had a road closed sign, 25 south of Hwy198 had a road closed sign. Dave decided we should see how bad 198 actually was. The result is shown here...



**Elkhorn road on the Carrizo Plain by Tom Short**

# A TRIP TO MAINLAND MEXICO: VISITING THE WONDERS OF COPPER CANYON

After visiting Baja California in the spring several years in a row, we felt like trying something new. Baja has changed a lot in just a few years, and it feels like there are US Vans and RVs everywhere. While the spirit of Baja still can be found, it seems to get harder and harder to get away from the other tourists.

Riding mainland Mexico sounded like a new challenge worth trying, and hearing nothing but outstanding reports from folks having visited the Copper Canyon, that's what we decided to set our sights on.

Copper Canyon (Spanish: Barrancas del Cobre) is a group of six distinct canyons in the [Sierra Madre Occidental](#) in the southwestern part of the [state of Chihuahua](#) in northwestern Mexico that is 5,000 sq mi in size. The canyons were formed by six rivers that drain the western side of the [Sierra Tarahumara](#) (a part of the [Sierra Madre Occidental](#)). The walls of the canyon are a copper/green color, which is the origin of the name. The towns on the Canyon Rim (Creel, Areponapuchi) are at about 7500 feet of altitude, while the villages at the bottom are at less than 2000 feet.

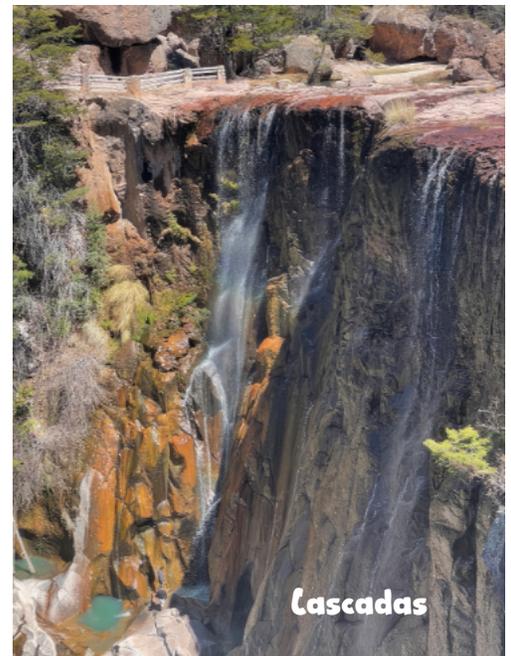
The whole area is a treasure trove of natural beauty, biodiversity, history, and fantastic riding!

Most Tourists visit the area on the Copper Canyon railway (El Chepe), which is a stunning piece of engineering achievement. Opened in 1961 after decades of construction, the railway was designed to connect the Pacific Ocean with Mexico's central desert territory and Chihuahua. Naturally, we were not interested in traveling by train. Riding our bikes into the Canyon sounded like a fun thing to do.

There are a couple of things that made the Copper Canyon area an easy target:

- It's only about 1.5 days of beautiful riding from the border at Douglas/AZ to the Canyon Rim
- The road from Creel down to Batopilas in the Canyon is now "mostly paved."

On Saturday, March 11, our group of four adventures met in Douglas/AZ to start our trip to the Canyon. While it is tempting to write about the beautiful places, great riding, amazing adventures, and friendly people, I really would like to provide some tips for other riders considering a trip down there. (All four of us will be available at upcoming campouts to provide you with colorful stories). If you are even thinking about making a trip to the Canyon – GO!





Photos by Barbara Schulze and Kurt Brunhaver

## Resources

Copper Canyon is certainly no longer the secret location it once was. It takes a little bit of effort but is easily reachable for every experienced touring rider. There are lots of YouTube videos and articles out there. Special mention is deserved by Bajabound.com for all kind of immigration and insurance questions, GPSKevinAdventurerides.com for great initial route and hotel recommendations (we followed most of his "Green route" but ended up with very different hotels) and ADVRider.com especially the "Is Mexico Safe?" forum.

The Sierra Tarahumara and the Copper Canyon area are an outstanding destination for adventure riders! We are already planning our return trip - with more time to explore.

## Paper Work

Traveling to the mainland is a bit more involved than traveling to Baja.

- Yes, you need a Passport. Mexico is a foreign country.
- You'll need a FMM (Forma Migratoria Multiple), a Mexican visa. This can be obtained when crossing the border, or easily online. If you have traveled to Baja, you should be familiar with it. It costs about \$36 and is valid for 180 days. If you obtain it online, make sure you use the official Mexican website. One of our group ended up with one from a visa service site, ended up paying \$120 and still had to get the FMM at the border and pay there. Also, if you get the FMM online, make sure you bring your official payment receipt. Without that receipt you'll have to pay again at the border. After crossing you have to stop and go to the immigration office to get your FMM stamped. That is a 3 minute process – but solely your responsibility. If you don't get the FMM stamped, you'll be in the country illegally. If you are stopped by the police or have any incident, this will make for a very unpleasant experience...
- To bring your bike to mainland Mexico, you will also need a TVIP (a Temporary Vehicle Import Permit). The purpose of this document is to make sure that you don't sell your bike in Mexico without paying sales tax. This document can either be obtained at an office of the Banjercito (pretty much at every border crossing). You'll need to provide title, registration, FMM, and a whole bunch of other documents. It is much easier to obtain the TVIP via the internet. Cost is about \$60 plus about \$400 deposit, that you'll get back when you leave the country. If you get the TVIP via the internet, there is nothing you need to do with it when you enter Mexico, you just have to carry it. When leaving the country, you must visit the Banjercito branch. They will inspect your bike (making sure that the VIN matches the documents) and refund your money. When we crossed in Agua Prieta, the process took about 15 minutes and two days later the deposit was credited on my credit card.

For all this paperwork, there are great tips on the Bajabound website.

## Attitude and Customs

A couple of additional things worth mentioning:

**Attitude:** While many (including mainland Mexicans) consider Baja as an extension of Southern California. The inhabitants of Durango, Chihuahua and Sonora are proud of their Mexican culture and heritage. They show a lot of pride in their (extremely clean) villages, food and customs. I can't emphasize enough; how friendly and helpful everybody was! The last thing they need is some clueless American tourists looking down on them. If you don't speak their language, that's your problem – not theirs. Having said that: At least trying to speak Spanish, lots of gestures and lots of smiling served our group well.

When my battery died on the trip, the gas station attendants went out of their way to find a car repair shop who might help.

They guys in the shop dropped everything, produced a battery tester and then disappeared for 20 minutes, just to show up again with a brand new battery that fit my bike. I still have no idea how that found that battery in a small village in the middle of nowhere....

**Different customs:** In an article published after last year's club Baja trip, the author lamented the need to pay for the use of restrooms at gas stations. Yep, that is a common practice all over the country. Personally, I'd rather pay 10 Pesos (5 cents) for a clean restroom, than suffer some of the gas station restrooms common in the US.

On the other hands, I had a leaky valve on my rear tire and had to stop frequently to pump up the tire. The gas station attendants were always super helpful and never tried to charge me. A nice difference to many US gas stations where the compressor now is attached to a credit card machine...

## Roads, Traffic and Gas

We encountered pretty much every road condition possible: from super smooth asphalt to deeply rutted dirt. Often within a few hundred meters, on the same street. While we had planned to ride 90% paved roads, the knobbyest on our bikes saw good use. Rock and Landslides are common in the mountains and cleanup might take a long time... The road from Creel to Batopilas is paved – except for some stretches where it has been taken out by landslides. Dodging boulders was part of the ride everywhere. All part of the adventure ;-)

Traffic in general was very light. Beside the brand-new big pickups with no plates, it was mostly trucks. Driving a big, under

powered truck in these steep, lonely mountains must be hard. We saw a lot of accidents. In general, the drivers were very courteous and signaled when the road was free for overtaking (Another fun thing to figure out: Is his turn signal on because he forgot to turn it off? Or does he want to turn left? Or does he want to warn us about something ahead? Or is he signaling that the road ahead is free?)

Gas stations were available whenever we needed them. Magna Premium (Red) was available at most of them. I immediately noticed the different smell of the gas in Mexico. And my gas mileage increased by about 20%. Yep, no ethanol – just the real stuff.

## Accommodation

Given our relatively high daily mileage goals and the cold night temperatures in the Sierra Tahamuhara we decided not to carry camping gear. There might be some campgrounds – but we didn't notice any. And with the low price of good hotels rooms – there is really no need to camp. Mid-March is the high season for the Copper Canyon area, and as hotel rooms are limited, we made reservations for most of our hotels. Very few of them have websites. And the ones with websites are way more expensive. A combination of google maps, facebook, WhatsApp and google translate served us well. On average we paid less than \$40 a night for nice rooms with two beds, heating, hot showers, and safe bike storage. Everything was clean, everybody was friendly and helpful. Food and adult beverages were easy to obtain (yes, I developed a taste for Tequila!). Most of the time we didn't know what we ordered but the food was generally great (With the one exception, when we ordered Menudo – not to my taste!!!)



Bato



Hotel-Topaz

## Security

The number one concern everyone seems to have with regards to travel to mainland Mexico seems to be security.

Four Americans being kidnapped in Matamores just days before our start date, State Department Travel advisories for Chihuahua and Sonora, plus general media frenzy about Mexico being lawless, meant we did not have an easy time convincing friends and family that our trip was a good idea. Many daily text messages and emails asking: "Have you been kidnapped yet?" did not enhance our enjoyment of the tour.

So how much risk did we really take?

To make it completely clear: Never on our trip did we feel threatened or in any kind of danger. Everyone we met was friendly and helpful.

But there are some realities to travel in these areas (The following information is based on personal experience, conversations with knowledgeable locals and the super helpful "Is Mexico Safe" threat on ADV rider)

- Yes, most of Chihuahua, Sonora and Durango are under total control of the cartels. The police have no real power here.
- The cartels are running a business, they mostly have no interest in additional, especially international, media attention. Kidnapping tourists is not really part of the business model. But if they think that you interfere with their business, you are certainly in danger.
- The biggest threat to the cartels are the other cartels. The highest risk for tourists (and "civilian" Mexicans is to get in the way during territory disputes. Well established towns in the middle of a secured area (like Batopilas) are as safe as can be. The areas right at the border are the most heavily disputed, therefore the most dangerous.

What, in practice. does that mean?:

While being used to lots of police or military checkpoints in Baja, during our whole trip on the mainland, we encountered only one checkpoint and that was very close to the Agua Prieta Border.

Along the empty desert and mountain roads, you'll encounter lots of cars and pickups parked by the side of the road, seemingly in the middle of nowhere. These are the lookouts. If a bunch of middle-aged folks on motorcycles ride by, all is good. If you decide to visit the area with a number of friends in a group of large SUVs with tinted windows, things might not be so good.

In every little town, where you stop for more than gas, a friendly guy will show up, speaking very good English, asking you where you are from and what your plans are. These guys are doing a job ;-). No reason to be unfriendly or brash to them. Most were super friendly, seemed genuinely interested in our journey, our thoughts about the region and were willing to provide tips for restaurants and info on road conditions.

You'll see lots of brand-new big trucks and SUVs with no number plates. If they overtake you in a hurry, it's not a great idea to race them.

The whole thing is so out in the open and obvious, that it is very difficult to feel threatened by it.

According to a local in Batopilas, who obviously had connections, motorcyclists are the safest travelers. Easy to observe, obviously no threat, and good for the local economy.

If you are into hardcore off road riding, I would recommend to let the locals know where you are planning to go. They will make sure that you don't end up in place you are not supposed to see. According to the same guy, the cartels would probably make some effort to get a stranded motorcyclist back into civilization – they just don't want the attention a "lost" American causes in their area.

In the other hand common sense does apply: Don't ask to many questions, don't party with these guys.

- A couple of years ago a Mexican teacher disappeared in Urique. His persistent questioning had raised suspicions. No matter how much you much liked to know how this guy in the middle of nowhere can afford a brand new tricked out Ram 2500. You are probably better off not knowing.
- Last year the cartel folks had a bit of a party close to the town square in Batopilas. A (Mexican) tourist was attracted by the free booze and party atmosphere and joined in. People got drunk, talked about stuff they were not supposed to talk about. He heard things he was not supposed to hear. He did not survive that experience.

So, the bottom line for me: Following some basic caution and common sense, I feel safer riding the cartel-controlled area of mainland Mexico, then some US freeways surrounded by huge SUVs, driven by stressed out soccer moms on their cell phones.

*Delf Hedde*



## TECHICAL TIP - ANOTHER USE FOR DUCT TAPE

The spark plugs on modern vertical twins are hidden deep within the cylinder head underneath the overhead camshaft. The on-plug coil are typically 4 to 5 inches long. Removing a plug requires a plug socket and extension bar. The plug socket has a handy rubber sleeve which pushes over the plug and allows the plug to be withdrawn along with the socket. Sounds simple but how many times has the socket stuck on the plug when then extension bar has been removed? Watching a YouTube video, the removal of car plugs the mechanic wrapped duct tape around all the socket joints. Problem solved...



# India by Motorcycle - Looking for Interested Parties.....

The journey would take us from jungles where the tiger roars, to the Taj Mahal, the symbol of love. We might sleep on the warm sands of beaches of Goa on the Arabian Sea and wake up to the cool hills of the Western Ghats Mountain range reaching the fabled small towns like Jaisalmer in Rajasthan covering five states.

The idea was proposed to me over campfire chats at the Cedar Flats campout. When I traveled to India last year in September, I made sure, that it was feasible to get the whole journey together with Enfield Himalayan.

Before going any further, I need to gauge the level of interest in joining me to ride India by motorcycle. This will help me see if there are enough interested riders to make such a trip worthwhile. I anticipate the journey would take at least three weeks excluding flights. Likely Dates right now seems to be February 2024.

Please call me, if you are sure you would love to come with us.

Mobile - 408-859-4459

Email - [ravivermanasikse@hotmail.com](mailto:ravivermanasikse@hotmail.com)

Thank you, Ravi Verma





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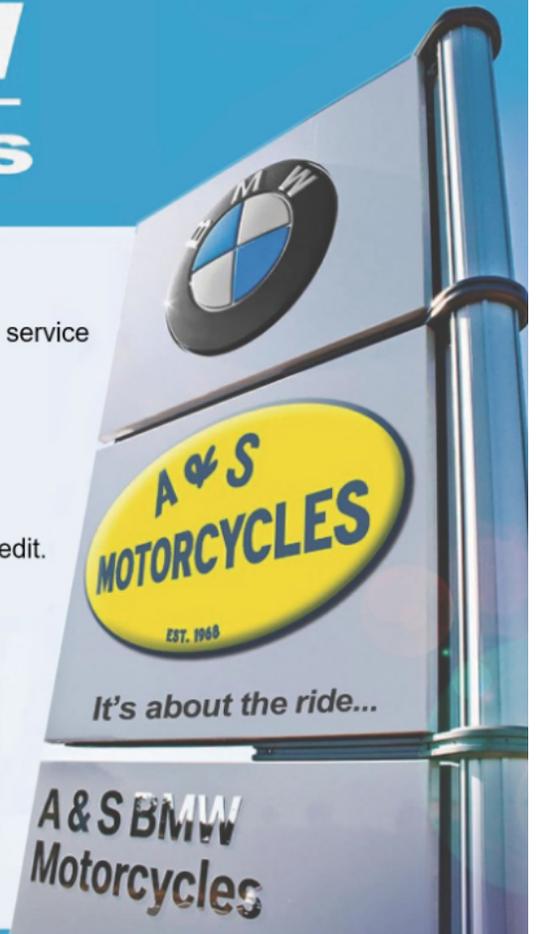
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## EVENTS

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
May meeting details TBA

**BMW Norcal 49er Rally -**  
26-29 May 2023. County Fairgrounds,  
5007 Fairgrounds Road, Mariposa, CA 95338  
Registration now open

**June Campout - Election Meeting**  
23-25 June 2023 at Uncle Tom's Cabin.  
15630 Wentworth Springs Road,  
Georgetown, CA 95634

## ANNIVERSARIES

|                          |                          |           |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| <b>April</b>             | <b>Ladd Carver</b>       | <b>10</b> |
|                          | <b>Linda Rodda</b>       | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>May</b>               | <b>David Hallwell</b>    | <b>20</b> |
|                          | <b>Walt Famlasher</b>    | <b>20</b> |
|                          | <b>Gino Musolino</b>     | <b>30</b> |
|                          | <b>Mark Allen</b>        | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Eric Bishop</b>       | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Douglas Boss</b>      | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Ran Bush</b>          | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Oliver Coolidge</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>William Cruz</b>      | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Kurt Davis</b>        | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Kenneth Fritz</b>     | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Mark Hanna</b>        | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Anthony Hurley</b>    | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Brian Jagger</b>      | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Rafael Lapizco</b>    | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Peter Lizdas</b>      | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Brant Miller</b>      | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Gary Nelson</b>       | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Robert Ohannesian</b> | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>David Oleary</b>      | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Manny Rubio</b>       | <b>5</b>                 |           |
| <b>Andy Rzad</b>         | <b>5</b>                 |           |
| <b>Steven Zawalick</b>   | <b>5</b>                 |           |
| <b>Dan Carter</b>        | <b>10</b>                |           |
| <b>Tim O'Lonnell</b>     | <b>10</b>                |           |
| <b>Jose Pepe Vallejo</b> | <b>10</b>                |           |
| <b>Edward Hanson</b>     | <b>15</b>                |           |
| <b>Javier Sanchez</b>    | <b>15</b>                |           |
| <b>Stuart Sorkin</b>     | <b>15</b>                |           |
| <b>Bob Lamott</b>        | <b>30</b>                |           |
| <b>Dan Smith</b>         | <b>10</b>                |           |
| <b>Mik Herman</b>        | <b>20</b>                |           |
| <b>June</b>              | <b>Ellan Castleman</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
|                          | <b>Tom Harris</b>        | <b>15</b> |
|                          | <b>Markus Fromherz</b>   | <b>20</b> |

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