



TOUR CAPTAIN'S REPORT

by Ted Crum

17 riders, including guest Rupert Page, left the Railroad Café in Livermore for the ride to the Oktoberfest at Sly Park, with John Ellis riding sweep. The Railroad gave us a nice private room and the service was excellent. Weather was good, and there was some fall color along the way. Our route took us through the quaint town of Knight's Ferry (known to me by my neighbor's cabin there), which is home to a covered bridge and park. We tried for a group picture with the bridge, but found no good scene and moved on. There is also a private campground there, near the river, which bears consideration.

Our route took us through ranch land to highway 26 for the climb past 49 and up to 88. Along 26, I spotted the traditional bypass at Double Springs Road, and we diverted. Russ Drake said later that we could also have taken a nice bypass onto the "Mokelmne Hill - Campo Seco Turnpike" just below "Mok Hill."

The November meeting is always delayed until December (6th) because of Thanksgiving, and will be held at "Jellystone Park" on Cobb Mountain (14117 Bottle Rock Rd, Cobb, CA (707) 928-4322), which we last visited 5 years ago. During the "dark days" after daylight savings we hold the meeting at 4:00 PM, and the ride will be short enough to get us there in plenty of time. The ride starts at Huckleberry's in Benicia (800 Southampton Rd, Benicia, CA (707) 745-3739); breakfast at 8:00, leaving at 9:00.

This is a non-catered event, but there are 3 restaurants within 10 minutes (marked on the map and GPS file), one of which can deliver pizza in 45 minutes if we decide to do that. We will have a gazebo for the meeting, and we can rent the rec room if we need it.

Check the web page and Meetup.com for the route instructions and GPS files. This time of year you should also check before leaving for weather-related changes.

The January meeting will be at Lovey's Landing, a campground resort on the Sacramento River near Colusa. The February meeting will be at Moro Bay, March is Death Valley, and April is at Bothe SP in the Napa Valley.

As always, your advice and comments are appreciated. Enjoy the Ride!

-- Ted Crum, Tour Captain, tedcrum@berkeley.edu

Below: Group photo from our trip to Jellystone in October 2009.





a touring and camping club
bmwnorcal.org

Charter No. 9, BMW Motorcycle Owners of America
Charter No. 210, BMW Riders' Association

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**Board Member*



PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS

by Z Ortiz



1965 – 2015:

In 2015, The BMW Motorcycle Club of Northern California will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. I would like to thank the visionary charter members that started the club, penned our By-laws and continually strived to make things better for the club and its members. I hope that you are as proud to be a part of this incredible accomplishment as I am as look forward to the next milestone. I am planning some fun stuff for you all.

Camping Fee Increase:

Effective in January, the member camping fee will increase to \$10.00 per person and \$20.00 per person for non-members. The increase was approved by your BoD to offset some of the camping expenses that increased last year and we anticipate some camping cost increases for this year.

Membership Celebrations – New Members:

We had several membership celebrations at Song Dog. Walter Gates received his 30-year Pin and Second Sunday Breakfast Ride Chairman and former Tour Captain, Cliff Dunn, received his 5-year membership anniversary pin. Ralph Wholey also received his 5-year membership pin. Please join me in welcoming new members Scott Mass & Jon Miller and returning member Mary-Anna Rae. We now have 197 riders on our Meetup site. The club website is the official representative/face of the club and our new webpage now reflects the upcoming events on the main page so you don't have to be redirected to meetup for the information.

If You Don't Like Change...

This month's Second Sunday Breakfast/Ride had 17 bikes in attendance with some new members and about 7 people from meetup. The weather could not have been better with the temp gauge on my bike showing 73 degrees. The tour went to Fremont Peak and finished at San Juan Batista Mission. Several riders hiked to the top of Fremont peak (myself included) and the visit to the mission was exquisite. The mission was established in 1797 and is the largest and only church with three isles. It was never abandoned and has been active to the present. We are planning a SSBR for December so stay tuned.

Continued on page 3

articles, photos, events, etc.
for the newsletter are due on the
first day of each month.

PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS

by Z Ortiz

Membership Blast:

The membership blast consists of an email message to the membership. It typically alerts our members of a change or update to current news or events. If you are not receiving the blasts please check your spam and set your email to accept them. Also ensure we have your current email address. Things can change quickly and it ensures you get the latest updates.

Holiday Party:

The Holiday party will take place The Fish Market 1855 South Norfolk San Mateo, CA 94403. December 13, 2014. Drinks at 6:30PM; Dinner 7:13PM

Gift exchange after dinner (\$25.00 recommended). Cost for dinner \$30.00 per person with your choice of one of the following: Steak, Salmon, Chicken or Pasta.

Appetizers are included (Calamari & Crab cakes); also included are two bottles of wine per table. The club store is up and running if you prefer to pay on-line or you can pay at the door with check or cash.

Whatever your payment method, you must RSVP by December 11, 2014 with your choice of entree or questions to: registration49er@yahoo.com

This is the last newsletter of 2014 and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of your board to wish everyone a Safe and Happy Holiday season.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

by John Vashon

Our membership stands at about 210 for the year and there were no significant changes in our financial position in the past 30 days. As a board member, I am working to implement the 49'er Ad Hoc Committee recommendations focused on increasing attendance: new location, more content and partnering with vendors and other clubs. If you support these measures, please email your President right now or it will be the same old 49'er in Mariposa, again! If anyone would like a copy of our Q1 financials, send an email to treasurer@bmwnorcal.org.

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**BMW Motorcycle Club
of Northern California**



Members are cordially invited to attend the Norcal Holiday party on December 13, 2014 at 7:00PM. Cost is \$30.00 per person and you can pay on line or at the door. Please RSVP by December 11, 2014 to: registration49er@yahoo.com with your choice of entrée. The Gift exchange will take place after dinner.

**The Fish Market
1855 South Norfolk
San Mateo CA 94403**

STARTERS FOR THE TABLE

DUNGENESS CRAB CAKES

whole grain mustard sauce

SALT & PEPPER CALAMARI

sweet chili, shot sauce

ENTREES

SCOTTISH SALMON

au gratin potatoes, steamed vegetables

ANGUS NEW YORK STEAK – with dijon butter

au gratin potatoes, steamed vegetables

BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST

au gratin potatoes, steamed vegetables

VEGETARIAN PASTA

WINE

The club will provide two bottles of wine per table.

BEVERAGE

Soda, Iced Tea, Lemonade, Coffee, Hot tea

UPCOMING 2014-2015 ANNIVERSARIES:

NOVEMBER/	MAY	JUNE – None	OCTOBER
DECEMBER 2014	Terry Burnes 25 Years	JULY	Don Alexson 5 Years
Greg Gibson 25 Years	Suresh Chandrasekaran 5 Years	Steven Palmer 15 Years	Carmen Vailly 5 Yeras
JANUARY 2015	Don Condon 5 Years	AUGUST	NOVEMBER/
Bruce Swantson 5 Years	Bill Hall 10 Years	Bruce Buxton 35 Years	DECEMBER
FEBRUARY	Wendy Kessler 5 Years	Fred Pravda 30 Years	Lee Damico 5 Years
Dale Rich 5 Years	David LaPoint 5 Years	Neil Talbert 10 Years	Marc Dubresson 15 Years
MARCH	Ed Perry 10 Years	SEPTEMBER	Doug Hubbard 40 years
Steve Kessinger 20 Years	Roger Rapp 5 Years	Brian Goetz 5 Years	
APRIL	Ron Suydam 5 Years	Linda Opp 20 Years	
Buddy Scauzzo 5 Years	Laurent Vailly 5 Years	Wayne Opp 20 Years	
	Roger Vandevent 5 Years		

PASSING OF LONG TIME CLUB MEMBER:

From the Sacramento Bee, The obituary for long time former club member Glen Sanders.

Glen (and Jean, deceased 1998) were members from Jan. 1973 through June 1993.

Glen Mack Sanders



Glen Mack Sanders died Tuesday, October 14, 2014 in Rocklin, CA after a battle with Parkinson's disease. Born on May 7, 1933 in Rocky, OK as the only child of Dr. Oral Malvin and Oma Marie Sanders and raised in Ada, OK, he graduated from Webb School in Bell Buckle, TN in 1951. Glen was discharged from the U.S. Army in 1955 after he served at Fort Ord and on Okinawa in Japan. On September 1, 1956, in Clatskanie, OR, he married Jean Arlene Jarvi. After initially living in Oklahoma, they settled their family in the San Francisco Bay area in 1963 where Glen remained an avid Oklahoma Sooner fan. Glen had a long career with American Airlines, starting in Oklahoma City and ending at Sacramento Int'l Airport. During his years with AA, he rose from crew scheduler to director of marketing of the Pacific Division to general manager. Upon his retirement, he moved to the other side of the terminal and worked on behalf of Sacramento County. While Glen loved airplanes, his passion was motorcycles. He and Jean were members of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America. They rode over 200,000 miles together attending rallies and simply enjoying the vast and diverse beauty of the country. After Jean passed in 1998, Glen found companionship with Alice "Al" Brown. Glen is survived by his

daughters Diane Marie Sanders Rountree (Phoenix, AZ) and Connie Jean Sanders Emerson (Sacramento) and his grandchildren Derek Rountree, Sophie Jean Sanders Emerson, and Edward Mack Sanders Emerson. The family thanks the loving staff at 'Oasis of Rocklin' at Heaven's Garden II for helping them and Glen through his final days. Glen will be interred at the Sierra Hills Memorial Park & East Lawn Mortuary. No public service will be held. Memorial donations can be made in Glen's name to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research and the UC Davis Health System.

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REG PRIEDMORE'S CLASS:

by Z Ortiz

There are many reasons why we love California but without question the weather one of the main ones. So it is that on a beautiful NOVEMBER day, three Norcal members participated in Reg Priedmore's CLASS in Laguna Seca (Mazda Raceway). This was the last class of the season and the Monterey area can be foggy, windy, cold, cold and damp, cold and windy and cold cold or beautiful as was the case for us.

We camped at the race track with the hill leading to the cork screw as our backdrop on one side, the city of Salinas on the other flanked by the backside of Fort Ord and of course the Pacific Ocean to the west. I joined Cliff Dunn on Monday afternoon and set up camp as we waited for Dan Rowe to get off work and join us. Cliff would be riding his new Ducati Hypermotard, I was riding my F800GS and Dan was on his R1200RT.

Cliff brought all the goodies because he trailered his bike and when you bring the cage, you bring the goodies. This session had a two-day track option and by us getting there early we could observe the Monday class and how they negotiated the track. Some were smooth, some refused to lean and some were incredibly fast. The bikes varied in displacement and brands. There were lot of Ducatis with some BMWs and a plethora of sport bikes. Oh, there were a lot of Triumphs too and one MV Agusta.

Once Cliff and I walked along the track, we headed back to camp and wondered where Dan was. We knew he would hit traffic but by getting there on Monday we would be rested and fresh in the morning instead of starting the day with 100 plus miles to get to the track.

We witnessed a spectacular sunset and it would have been really dark except for the blanket of moonlight that covered the hills surrounding the track. Dan arrived to the campground without a hassle because Cliff sent a map of the area via email and Dan actually looked at it. We chatted as Dan set up his tent as and he was rewarded with a cold beverage once he was done. Dinner was prepared in camp and it was delicious. We didn't have a campfire so we added layers of clothing to ward off the chilly evening.



REG PRIEDMORE'S CLASS:

by Z Ortiz

"It's not all about speed, it's about control, learning and survival. With all these things comes speed in its cleanest form. It's about exclusivity and plenty of track time with learning at this World Championship track we've come to know as Mazda Raceway at Laguna Seca."

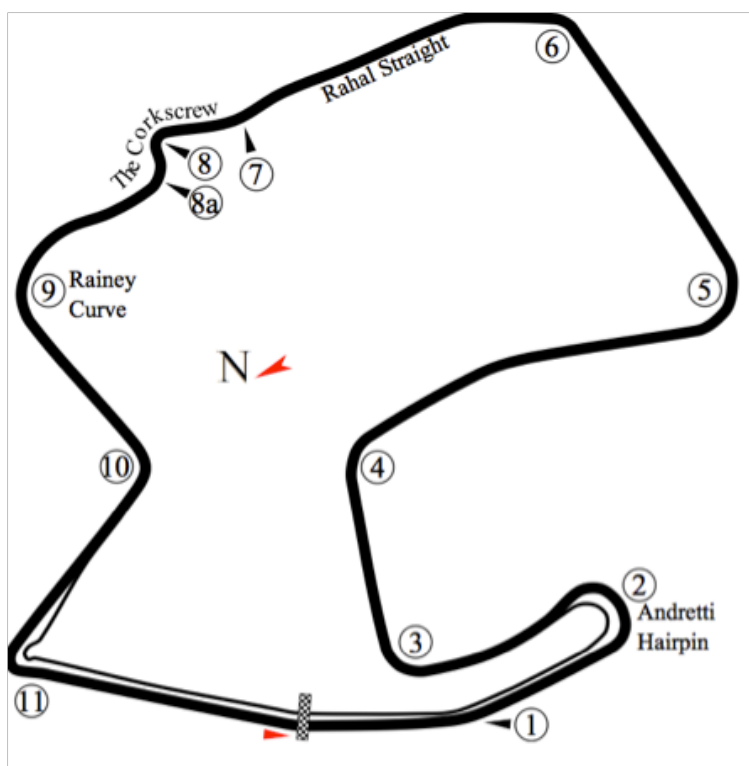
The track was built in 1957 at a cost of \$1.5 million raised from local businesses and individuals on part of the US Army's Fort Ord (a maneuver area and field artillery target range) after the nearby Pebble Beach Road Races were abandoned for being too dangerous. In 1974, the property was deeded over to the Monterey County Parks Department and continues to be part of the park system to this day.

The track itself has undergone significant changes over the past two decades to meet evolving safety homologation requirements of the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM), Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and other sanctioning bodies. Changes include the addition of the entire infield area in 1988 (present day turns 3, 4 and 5, eliminating the straight that started at present day Turn 2 and ended at present day Turn 5) extending the track from its original 1.9-mile length to its current 2.238-mile length, plus the relocation of pedestrian bridges and embankments, and the expansion of gravel pits for additional runoff.

Laguna Seca is a beautiful track and is full of surprises if you loose concentration. Traction on the track varies from the morning to noon when the sun is at its peak and then cools down as the sun starts to go west. These are some of the things that addressed in the class. For those of you not familiar with CLASS, there are two groups that alternated throughout the day. While one group is on the track the other is in the classroom. There is plenty of track time and it felt like we were in the classroom all too quickly. We were in the B-group and we were taken around the track and Reg explained the layout as we watched the A-group go around the track. In the classroom there were plenty of questions and probably the biggest age gap I have seen in quite some time. I was quite pleased to see the young people partake in a formal format to hone their skills and become better riders.

There are plenty of instructors to help and guide you to achieve your goals. While the world famous corkscrew is perceived as the biggest track challenge, it was turns 1 & 2 that were the biggest challenge for me. The turns present themselves after a straightaway where you can pick up some serious speed that needs to be shaved off quickly after the straightaway crests and you set up for the turns or you end up in the gravel. It was over too quick and I refused to deal with reality. Even as I ROK-Strapped my camping gear to the bike my mind refused to let my face stop smiling.

Photo below: Dan Row & Cliff Dunn



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Power Distribution and Control in the 21st Century

Dan Grassetti, President
Arboreal Systems, Inc.
10/24/14



While Bikes continue to get more sophisticated with features such as ABS, traction control, and CANbus electrical distribution, they are becoming more difficult to add electrical accessories to. This has created the need for better solutions of powering and controlling aftermarket electrical accessories.

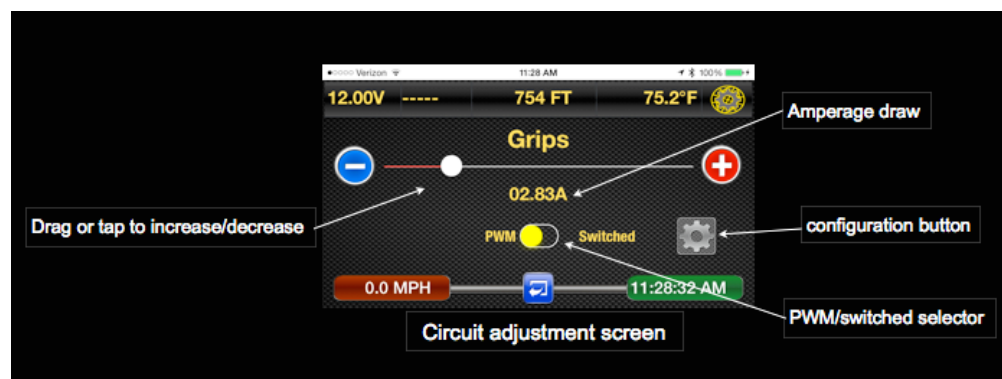
With the introduction of the Neutrino Black Box and Cockpit software there is now a truly elegant way to solve this problem.

Neutrino is truly state of the art, using programmable self-resetting circuit breakers to protect your devices. If you exceed the limit on a circuit Neutrino automatically shuts the circuit down until the overload condition is fixed. With a fuse-based solution you needed to keep on replacing fuses until the issue was resolved. With a fuse-based solution, you needed to engage in a bunch of trial and error (and fuse replacement) to optimally size each circuit for the required load. With Neutrino it's easy to just twirl a scroll wheel just to the point where the circuit is protected, but no more. No fuses to replace.

Neutrino is completely software programmable. What this means is that you can easily configure each circuit not only for the circuit breaker limit, but for circuit memory (what happens with the circuit after you stop for gas), you can designate circuits to be either switched or variable, and you can set what you want the circuit to do once the bike is shut down. You can choose between ignition based shutdown, keeping the circuit on for a specified amount of time, or having the circuit shut down only when the battery voltage drops to a level you select.

It's virtually impossible to do this sort of configuration with a fuse block solution. And unlike a fuse block, you don't need to use relays to switch high-amperage circuits as the heavy duty FETs (field effect transistors) in Neutrino can handle the load...easily.

While there are a couple of products out there that are essentially solid state versions of a basic fuse block, none offer the sophisticated features that Neutrino offers. These products not only lack much of what Neutrino offers for power distribution functionality, but unlike Neutrino they require a PC to configure (forget about making changes on the road), and can't control circuits at all.



Of course Neutrino does a whole lot more than just distribute power.

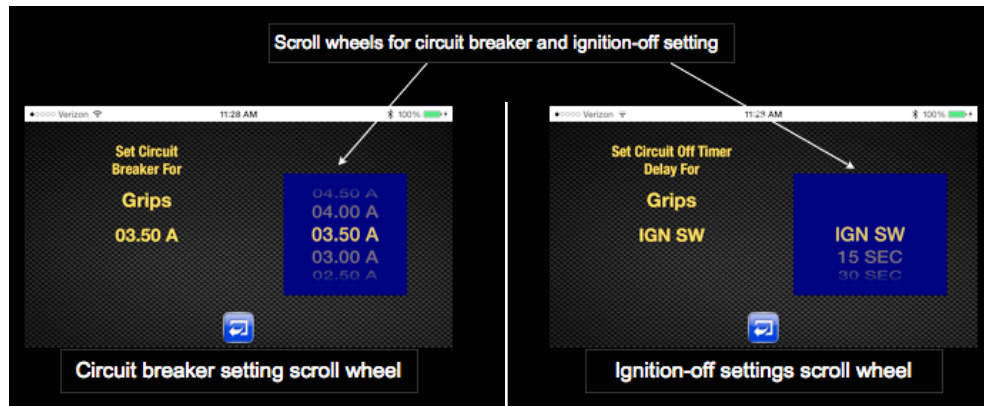
Unique in the world, in addition to offering the most flexible, most convenient,

and highest performance power distribution functionality, Neutrino actually allows you to control 6 circuits.

Neutrino can handle up to 20 amps on a circuit, up to a total of 60 amps, allows you to designate any of these circuits as being either switched or variable, and is both configurable and controllable via a Bluetooth link from a smart phone.



Imagine, not only can you fully configure and control Neutrino, but you can do it anytime anywhere.

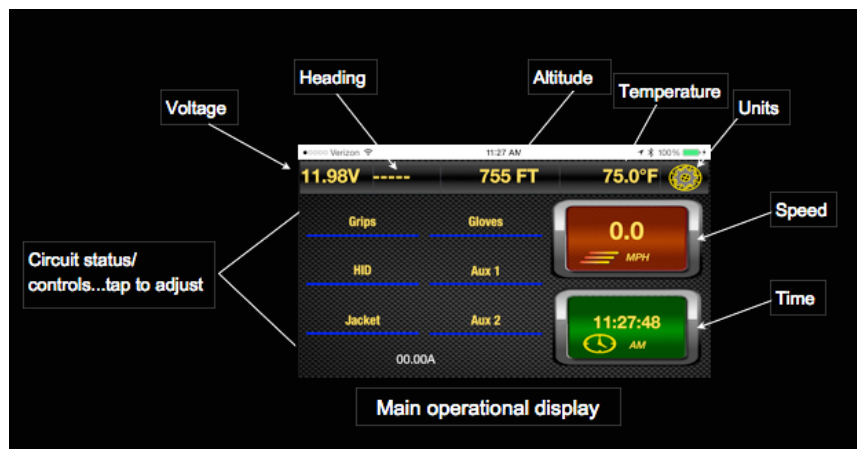


But it doesn't stop there. The fact is that serious riders want both electrical and environmental information at their fingertips. They don't want to have to go between various devices to obtain

situational awareness. Like a fighter pilot, the serious rider wants a smart system that provides everything that's needed for optimal safety and control at a glance.

Neutrino does this. Neutrino provides constantly updated battery voltage. It tells you how many amps each accessory is drawing, and what the total load is. Most importantly, it will tell you if the battery voltage is getting precariously low....and even automatically shut down circuits if needed.

Neutrino also provides a wealth of environmental information, including heading, elevation, ambient temperature, accurate speed, and time. You no longer need to guess which direction you're headed. You will know your exact elevation. You will have accurate ambient temperature information. And you will have an accurate speed readout, so that you don't have to guess as to how far off from true speed your bike's speedometer is.



Most importantly, Neutrino has a well thought out, user-friendly interface. This means that it's been optimized for folks who actually intend to use it on a bike.

The Neutrino hardware is equally exceptional. The Neutrino module is really compact (.9" deep, 2" tall, and 3" wide), it's completely waterproof, and

it's encapsulated in mil-spec heat-transferring epoxy making it incredibly rugged.

The circuit board is a full 6 layers offering both power and ground planes. This is important in that it makes hookup a whole lot easier than products only handling the positive side of the

circuit. It's also important in that it solves ground loop noise issues common to audio installations that use chassis ground.

Neutrino includes an industrial grade temperature monitoring system capable of measuring everything from ambient temperature to engine case temperature.

Finally, the Bluetooth radio system was engineered to be incredibly easy and flexible to deploy. Instead of putting the radio on the main circuit board we instead located it at the end of a USB pigtail cable. This has a lot of advantages.



First, you can locate the Neutrino module just about anywhere on your bike with no worries about inhibiting the Bluetooth signal. Second, the Bluetooth radio is removed from a potential source of heat and electrical noise. Finally, the product essentially future proof in that over time we may add USB hub support and allow you to both power and interact with all manner of USB devices.

We think that at \$289 plus \$9.99 for the smart phone app, Neutrino offers incredible value. In fact if you added up all the items that Neutrino replaces the number could easily reach 3 times what Neutrino costs.

Of course this doesn't even consider the ease and low cost of installing Neutrino versus these other solutions. Most importantly, there's simply no other product out there that consolidates all the functionality that Neutrino offers into such an elegant and wire/relay-free solution.

Neutrino is patent pending. Designed, engineered and manufactured in the USA.

www.arborealsystems.com Berkeley, California, USA

GOT DIRT?: *Secretarial Scriblings on*

Her Latest Two-Wheeled Exploration

By Joyce Sampson

Anyone who's been at a NORCAL general meeting in the last six months knows I'm on the investigative prowl to get into Adventure Riding. Indeed, I can probably name a few club members who are sick of my endless string of questions about the positive and negative aspects of this or that GS while I'm in the throes of the circular analytical madness of deciding which bike to buy. Not that I haven't ridden off road, as I've done on my current beloved 09 RT. But that's just it. Drop that beautiful baby, and I'll be digging deep into my pockets to fix the carnage.

As part of my research, I've considered going to Rawhyde in Southern California. As most of you know, that is BMW's officially-endorsed GS training course. It has some very useful course choices for off-road riding skills and if need be, rent a GS800 and/or 1200 to do so. An even more tempting alternative is their "Demo Program," a rather new edition to their schedule. Designed for people who are interested in buying within the next three months, this course exists in a one or two-day option. It provides some off-road skills, and a chance to ride three different GS models, each on a 1.5 hour ride that splits the time between street and dirt. The pot of gold at the end of this seemingly-expensive rainbow is reimbursed tuition fees in the form of a \$500 certificate towards a new bike redeemable at participating BMW dealerships for the one-day course, and the certificate plus a new set of Sava tires for the two-day class. For more details on all their programs, check them out: <http://www.rawhyde-offroad.com/home.html>

In the course of inquiring about Adventure riding, someone told me about Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area. So I popped on the Internet, found their website and began to wonder whether HHSRVA had any off-road riding courses, especially since the place is less than an hour from where I live. A few mouse clicks later, and Voila! Up popped the real *raison d'être* of this article, Brian Garrahan's two-day "Intro to Dirt" Course, which I took on the weekend of 25-26 October 2014.

For those of you who might not be familiar with Garrahan, he is a champion "International Six Days

Enduro" racer with numerous wins in Hare Scrambles and other dirt-bike events. His riding school, GARRAHAN OFF-ROAD TRAINING (GOT), offers different types of instruction for riders of all ages, both genders, and various skill levels. The "Intro to Dirt" course is aimed at new dirt riders or experienced ones wishing to improve their skills. Aside from myself and one notable exception (a young man who was completely new to motorcycling), all of my classmates had dirt riding experience, and by their own admission, were seeking to get rid of the bad habits they had acquired over the years, or because they were self taught and never really knew proper riding techniques.

Here's the BLUF (bottom line up front): GOT's "Intro to Dirt" course is an outstanding and fun bang for the buck that is absolutely worth every spent penny. It included a well-balanced and well-paced mixture of demonstrations of techniques, skills-building exercises, and actual time on the tracks and trails of Hollister Hills. I rented, from GOT, all the appropriate dirt-riding gear: helmet, jersey, pants, gloves, knee pads, chest protector (which my Early Modern European-historian self persists in misnaming a "breast plate"), socks (whooduh thunk they have special socks and that they're comfortable?), and a little Honda 125 motorcycle with the number "4" on it. Now you might be wondering, "what about elbow pads, why that motorcycle, and how much did it cost?" More on that later; first let's get to the brass tacks, the training days.

Day 1 of Intro Dirt:

The class began at 9am, but Brian asked "gear renters" to arrive early to get kitted out and ensure everything fits. After trying a few boots, getting dressed and looking conspicuously like the cat who had been standing nearest the Old Fashioned Sticky-Candy making machine when it exploded, I joined a small bevy of gathering students who were attired in equally outlandish dirt bike gear. Even the clothes are fun!

Brian began the class by using a motorcycle propped on a stand to demonstrate several elements of proper body positioning and riding techniques. These included standing positions for balance in general, for riding in different types of terrain, for uphill and downhill riding, and the ever-important position for braking.

Basic explanations finished, we headed to the practice field, where it began to pour a good rain. Nothing better than wet dirt biking, because, well hey, it's dirt and why not get dirtier? Not to mention that it really squelched the sand and dust, creating a nice pack—sometimes downright slushy mud bogs—on the trails we rode later. Mud-Biking!

Fantastic! Ok, well, except for the minor problem that I couldn't see because goggles don't come with windshield wipers. The practice field was a flat, graded dirt area, with a mini hill on the left side and, eventually, over the course of the two-day instruction, cones, and wooden planks, ranging in size from overgrown toothpicks to railroad ties. There, we went through several drills, including really slow riding (which helps hone your control), braking exercises, cornering drills, and how to get yourself out of the "I stopped on this hill and didn't mean to" pickle. Throughout the day, we switched between practicing skills in this flat area and putting them to use in the real world, as we rode on the Hollister tracks and trails. The pacing between skills practice and putting them to use was perfect.

Day 2 of Intro to Dirt:

Began the same as Day 1. Brian went over proper body positioning and riding—the repeat was helpful—and we headed over to the flat field. We practiced some of the skills from the previous day initially, but also as the day advanced, added more difficult skills, such as such as how to pull a wheelie, with the aim of getting the front tire up and over obstacles, first imaginary ones and then real ones, at our own pace when we were ready to try them. I was never able to pull the wheelie, but still able to get over the obstacles (although I did not try the railroad tie), probably due to the fact that several of my mountain-biking skills translate to motorcycles. If you ever took a street course whose instructions included going over obstacles, which I have, that, too, translates to dirt. On- trail experiences on Day 2 included some of the same trails, but also some more challenging ones, including some pretty steep downhill's and uphill's. I did well except for one downhill "get off" when I started to "think" about what I was doing, rather than just "feel" it. The last ride of Day 2 was, in my view, perhaps a little too challenging for truly new dirt riders, because it involved some fairly severe ruts in short spaces. On that trail, many riders hit the ground, or as a dear friend of mine likes to say, "Nonsense! I didn't crash, I was taking a soil sample!" I was among them and after about four dirt kisses, exclaimed loudly: "I'm done wrecking for the day."

Both class days finished about 3:30, and I was exhausted each time. I'm positive I lost weight in the course, because on Day 1, the pants I rented were

Pictures: Top to Bottom, Picture 1 and 2 Brian explaining then demonstrating body positioning. Picture 3: Me after I hit the ground in my cornering "Get off"



pretty tight in the waste, and despite a washing and drying on Saturday night, were not as tight when I put them on Sunday morning. This is a great sport for maintaining physical fitness, but like street riding itself, also requires excellent fitness to do it, indeed, much more so.

A person can be an expert in a subject, but that does not always mean he or she can teach it effectively. This is most definitely not true of Brian Garrahan. He is an outstanding teacher. One of his excellent teaching aspects is his consistency in explaining and demonstrating, not only the “what to do’s,” but also the “what not to do’s.” There’s nothing better to understand the “why’s” of certain techniques than to visualize what happens when you do what you’re supposed to do, and what happens when you don’t. Ok, I lied; there is something “better.” But it’s worse, not better, because that’s to experience an “I’m riding an 100-year-old stage coach in Moab with no shocks ride” or worse yet, a “get off.” When the latter happened to me for the first time—on the first day—I felt like I had been bucked off a world-class bull.

Remember that “little” 125 motorcycle and the missing elbow protectors? The “incident” happened while practicing the following cornering/steering skill around a cone: get up some speed as if you’re approaching a corner, brake fairly hard before the corner using proper braking positioning, sit down on the gas tank, extend the inside foot forward, release the clutch some, and twist the throttle, so you slide the motorcycle’s back wheel to get you around the corner. All was going well until . . .

Well I don’t really know what happened other than a monster—who was apparently sick of the fly on its back—threw me off violently to the bike’s left side. In retrospect, I think I hit the front brake a little too hard, but not hard enough to Endo. As a trained street rider, I’ve always used the whole-hand method of steering, clutch and braking control. Dirt biking recommends one or two fingers on the clutch and brake controls, so that the remainder of your hand remains on the grips. That’s key so that an unexpected bit of chunky terrain doesn’t rip the handlebars completely out of your hand. It’s either that, or I hit the back brake too hard and lost the back wheel. With no elbow pads, I got a nice little cut on my left elbow. Smartly, I decided to ask for elbow pads on Day 2—a thing I had considered do-



Pictures: Top to Bottom, Picture 1: Me riding in the cornering exercise (this is before the get off) Picture 2: My bloody elbow (from the cornering "get off") Picture 3: Brian stepping in front of a rider during a "control the bike" exercise.

ing on Day 1 at the very outset of class, but did not. AGATT. Lesson re-learned.

Returning to Brian's teaching techniques. Another superb point is his conscientiousness about student-to-teacher ratio. He had two excellent assistant instructors: Kirk Cote and Branden Lepard. On Day 1, there were only seven students, so that was a 2-to-1 student-to-teacher ratio, and on Day 2, about eight more students showed up, making a 3-to-1 ratio. When I asked Brian how many students he teaches before adding assistant instructors, he said eight. The assistants Kirk and Branden were very helpful, watchful, and encouraging throughout each day. Kirk was a very congenial soul who took charge of the first aid for my bleeding elbow, while Branden was more reserved but had the most amazing ability to appear out of nowhere on the trail to help or provide instruction while you were riding. These two were outstanding riders who demonstrated great control of their bikes, but Brian is poetry-in-motion.

A third aspect about his teaching method that was really helpful was that while you were on a track or trail, Brian, Brendan or Kirk would ride behind you, and provide instructions, praise when you were doing something right, or just add a little encouragement. The way and frequency with which they did this was not intrusive. In short, Brian's teaching technique, philosophy, and approach at the school lives up to the description on his website's "About" page and is very effective for riders seeking to learn or improve their dirt biking skills.

The only negative aspects about the class are two things for which I have suggestions for improvement. First, on Day 2, when we were on the flat field and the class was larger, Brian tended to explain things to the left side of the class, with his front facing away from the right side. That made it hard for the right side to hear instructions. So, to ensure he is heard and to save his own voice, it would be better for him to ask students to form a semi-circle around him while he provides instructions. Otherwise, although it might be harder on his voice, he could provide instructions to one side and then to the other, or stand farther away from the group and speak louder than he already does (but he is at the appropriate volume already).

A second suggested improvement regards safety during skills practice. On Day 2, during the cor-

nering drill, Brian divided the class into four smaller groups who were to practice around four separate sets of two cones. I was nearly hit about four times in a row by riders who were running up on me and braking while I was just at the point of braking and sitting down on the gas tank to get around the cone. That's the point in the exercise where a rider is most likely to make a mistake, because all the body movements required to execute sharp cornering and sliding the back tire. Those are the very skills that you're practicing. I think the riders were just excited to try the exercise, but it was definitely not safe and it unnerved me, so I went and got the "ok" to get in another group. Thus, I would recommend that prior to this exercise, he instruct riders not to begin their ride toward a cone until the other rider has cleared it.

So, to finish: Earlier, I said this was a great bargain. The cost for all that fun, learning, and gear rental (including motorcycle and socks)? \$448, a bloody elbow, sore wrists, fatigue, and lots of basic off-road riding skills that will translate to Adventure and street riding. If you bring your own gear and motorcycle, and/or take the one-day class, prices are cheaper. GOT Dirt? Brian Garrahan's Off-Road Training school certainly does. Check it out at: <http://www.garrahanoffroadtraining.com> --Joyce Sampson



Above: Class photo on Day 1

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COMING EVENTS

Information in this issue.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| December 6 | Meeting & Camping -- Jellystone Park - Cobb Mountain |
| December 13 | Holiday Party -- The Fish Market - San Mateo |
| December 14 | 2nd Sunday Breakfast Ride -- Location T.B.D. |
| January 11 | 2nd Sunday Breakfast Ride -- Location T.B.D. |
| January 24 | Meeting & Camping -- Lovey's Landing - Colusa |
| February 8 | 2nd Sunday Breakfast Ride -- Location T.B.D. |
| February 21 | Meeting & Camping -- Location T.B.D. |

blue/bold items are Norcal events. All events in California unless otherwise stated.

Prospective members may receive a complimentary newsletter by contacting the Secretary.