



# THE BEEMER READER

VOL. 26 • NO. 2 • FEBRUARY 2015

## We welcome in the New Year



Thursday, January 1, 2015 marked the annual Toast to the Rest of Canada (TROC) and a few club members met at Island View Beach Regional Park to pay tribute to

those Canadians who don't live in a place which allows them to ride their motorcycles year round. After meeting up on the beach, the group moved on to Bob and Janette's

home in Sidney to enjoy some chili and conversation, as well as a piece of cake commemorating the event. Thanks to the Leitchs and all the organizers.

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## Next Breakfast/Brunch

### Sunday, February 1



### WHERE:

Chequered Flag  
2345 Millstream Road  
Victoria

### WHEN:

9:30 am



# Members chase the Cannonball Run

by Geoff Stevenson

“We don’t have deep pockets,” Joan Decosa was saying. “You can do it.”

“It” was the Motorcycle Cannonball Endurance Run, an event for bikes built before 1937 and running from Daytona, FL., to Tacoma, WA., a mere 3,938 miles in 16 days. (That’s 6,337.6 km., if you insist).

Ernie Lalonde and I were in a parking lot in Yakima, the penultimate stop on the 2014 Cannonball in late September (the next event is scheduled for 2016). Organized by the Antique Motorcycle Club of America, there were three classes: 700cc

and under; 701-1,000cc; and over 1,000cc.

Bikes and riders had stopped for the night. There was, of course, routine maintenance - and some serious repairs (more on this later) - and we happened on Joan and husband Steve and their beautiful 1927 Harley-Davidson JD.

They are retired teachers from Oswego, N.Y. and rebuilding the bike had been a team effort. Joan had done a lot of the work, sanding and fairing fenders before final painting, for example - and laying out the perfect pin-striping.

Steve had found a mechanical

mentor. He’d done much of the engine rebuilding preparation, but the mentor had honed cylinders and checked the crankshaft. The mentor finally rebuilt the engine while Steve watched, then told Steve to strip it down and rebuild it again. That way, the mentor explained with stark logic, Steve should be able to handle any problems on the run.

(They also rebuilt a spare engine, but it was never needed).

With their carefully-prepared bike, they failed to run just one stage - a 244-mile leg in the middle of the event. (The end cap on the generator had come loose the previous day and damaged the unit). Steve bemoaned the fact that they had wired every nut and bolt on the bike, but had failed to use Loctite on the bolts securing the end cap. Those old V-twins sure can vibrate.

Learning to ride one was its own challenge, too. Most bikes in the run had a foot-operated clutch on the left with hand shifter on left or right. The front brake was on the left side of the handlebar; the rear brake (thank goodness) was a conventional right-side foot pedal.

The Decosas wound up in 44th place among the 72 finishers (101 bikes had been scheduled to start in Daytona). Of the bikes that got to Tacoma, only 24 ran all 3,938 miles without any penalty points.



**Many of the entrants were pretty original. This is a 1936 H-D VLD, ridden by Craig Jackman into 54th place.**



# BMW represented in the Cannonball



***Of course, there were Beemers. Norm Nelson finished second on this 1928 R52.***

Would they do it again? We asked. “Absolutely,” they replied in unison.

## **An oil change every day**

Joan drove their Ford Flex, towing a covered trailer, between stops. She was waiting for Steve when he rode in each afternoon. He checked the bike over carefully at the end of each leg, changing engine oil, checking the drive chain and contact breaker points, and adjusting valves every day.

He told us he’d lost 40 pounds in the six weeks before the run, spending hours on the treadmill in that time. He and Joan had become virtual vegetarians, but they hadn’t been prepared for the food laid on for the teams after each leg. “Mostly

barbecue and white bread,” Steve lamented.

I have no plans to enter the 2016 Cannonball (Ernie can speak for himself). But we had a great time in Yakima and Tacoma with the contestants - and could have ridden all 142 miles with those wonderful old bikes on the final leg.

(The ride is named for Irwin G. “Cannon Ball” Baker, who set a record for a coast-to-coast ride in 1914. A New York reporter said Baker rode “like a cannonball express train” and the nickname stuck for life).

We elected to ride with the contestants from Yakima to the top of Chinook Pass - almost 5,500 feet.

But after that (concerned about inadvertently getting in someone’s way and thus hampering a bike in the run), we rode to Destination Harley-Davidson in Tacoma on our own and caught up with the field again.

Only the contestants knew the route for each leg (they rode on back roads wherever possible). We were able to latch onto a group of perhaps 15 bikes heading west from Yakima.

Just as well, too: Unless we’d been following closely, we’d never have kept the field in sight as it wound through the orchards and vineyards of Yakima and nearby Naches.

Ernie and I had planned this ride months ago. We had booked a motel room in both Yakima and Tacoma (and checked each reservation in August). As it turned out, neither motel knew we were coming when we checked in - but it fortunately didn’t matter, since both found a room for us.

Unlike many of the Cannonball contestants, our ride to Yakima was uneventful. We took the Washington State Ferry from Sidney to Anacortes (just \$22 for a senior rider with motorbike) and spent the first night in Twisp, WA.

I’ve been there many times; it may not have the tourist attractions/traps of Winthrop, a few miles away, but Twisp motels are half the price.



# Cannonball commemorates Irwin Baker



**Steve DeCosa's 1927 H-D JD was one of the prettiest bikes in the rally. He and wife Joan came in 44th.**

On the Saturday, we rode south on Highway 153 to #97 and Wenatchee, then west a few miles before turning south again over Blewett Pass to Ellensburg.

From Ellensburg, most people take Interstate 82 to Yakima; anyone on two wheels should take the wonderful Yakima Canyon Road (#821). This has a series of delightful curves (and some great scenery). But, be warned: The speed limit is mostly 45 m.p.h. and there

many Harleys needed new piston rings; I didn't have the heart to ask the mechanic whether this was the first change for the trip.

A French crew with a 1920s four-cylinder Henderson had the back wheel off and needed new wheel bearings. It wasn't clear where they came from, but two boxes containing the correct size of tapered rollers appeared and the bike was soon back together. (It was

are often cops on patrol.

Riders began arriving at the Harley dealer in Yakima mid-afternoon on the Saturday. We watched a number of contestants check in and get their route instructions for the next day.

In the parking lot later in the day, we met the Decosas - and watched a number of skilled mechanics at work.

## **New piston rings**

One of the

a successful repair job, too: We saw the bike ride into Tacoma next day under its own power).

"These bikes are constantly trying to seize up, burn up or blow up," Dan Kraft from Santa Cruz, CA., told the Tacoma News Tribune. He was aboard a 1934 Harley and finished 28th.

There were clearly a number of seriously-skilled mechanics wrenching on these old gals. It was fascinating to see that conventional wrenches were used on only a few assignments: The tool of choice, so far as we could see, was often large adjustable pliers or vise grips.

There was a crowd of several hundred supporters to greet the old bikes when we rode into Destination Harley-Davidson in Fife, a northern suburb of Tacoma. The dealership is normally closed Sundays and the company seemed to be doing serious business at the cash register.

The finish proper was a couple of miles south at the LeMay car museum. We were there a few minutes before 1400, when the Cannonball riders were due to arrive.

Just a few minutes after the appointed hour, winner Hans Coertse rode in on his 1924 Indian Scout. He was followed by Norm Nelson aboard a 1928 BMW R52. Third was Giuseppe Savoretti, riding a 1931 Moto Guzzi Sport.



# 1924 Indian Scout finishes in first place



**Looking as fresh as the day he started, this is winner Hans Coertse's 1924 Indian Scout.**

Now we had a chance to check out some of the more exotic bikes.

There were two Moto Freras, one a 1926, the other built in 1928. (They're 500cc singles, built in Italy).

There was a 1936 Sokol 1000, which crossed the finish line to loud cheers and enthusiastic waving of the Polish flag. (This was a 45 deg. V-twin, looking remarkably like an Indian of the same vintage).

There were a number of four-cylinder Hendersons, several of them wonderfully restored.

## **Lawrence rides again**

There was a 1933 Brough Superior. We had seen this bike on the road earlier in the day; it flew by us twice

at perhaps 70mph going up a steep section of Chinook Pass. (It seemed the rider needed frequent stops for gas, which was hardly a surprise given his cruising speed).

This guy didn't look much like Lawrence of Arabia. But he was certainly in a hurry, just like the world's most famous Brough rider.

There was a 1929 Sunbeam M9, which finished fourth. This 500cc single featured overhead valves - and dual headers, just like a Rudge of the same era.

We talked briefly to Coertse on the winning Indian Scout. "The bike just ran better and better as the run went on," he told me, with an ear-to-ear grin. His next challenge was to take

the bike home to South Africa.

Probably half the contestants were riding old Harleys. Some were very original, but a number, like Steve and Joan Decaso's 1927, were flawlessly restored.

And there were more Harleys to come, since the Seattle Cossacks, mounted on matching ivory and burgundy 1938 Harleys, were about to perform for the

crowd.

The highlight of this display was three bikes riding beside each other, with a total of nine Cossacks sitting, standing or kneeling while the riders piloted the bikes perhaps a hundred yards, executed a neat 180-degree turn and rode another 100 yards before dismounting.

As Ernie and I walked to the parking lot, we were glad to be aboard bikes that started with the push of a button - and were unlikely to need a major rebuild later that afternoon (or ever).

But we sure got a charge from those old gals - and the dedicated enthusiasts keeping them on the road.



# 2015 Beemer Club Bulk Tire Purchase

by Bill Wallace

Once again I will be canvassing members for their interest in ordering tires for the upcoming riding season.

For new members, this tire order has been an annual event for the past several years. It is really quite simple for a member to receive at least a 30 % discount off retail, plus have the mounting and balancing free for each tire. The nice thing about it is: you do not have to install the tires at the time of purchase but rather you can wait have them installed when you wish at a later date, not a bad deal.

If you are interested please contact me at home **250.652.0214** or **[bwreddog@gmail.com](mailto:bwreddog@gmail.com)** with brand and model of tire and the size information and I will be able to get a quote for you. There is no obligation to buy a tire if you are not satisfied with the price, however if you accept the quote the rest of the club members will expect you to honor the price as a collective group.

We are buying tires as a group under quoted prices, if someone cancels then the price of the tires could be jeopardized. I expect to have the tire order completed and

tires made available by the end of March, after this date the next tire order will be in 2016.

All tires purchased in 2015 are fresh new tires directly from the factory. It makes sense to purchase tires this time of the year as you get this special deal for your Beemer. Whereas, if you wait till the summer to buy a tire at a higher price, you may have to wait for a tire shipment or have to accept another tire brand when your tire is destroyed by a nail. It's up to you on how you approach this, but eventually you will need tires.

## A Reminder to All...

If you haven't already paid your 2015 BMW RVI membership dues please complete a membership renewal form and forward it with your payment to Peter Juergensen. Alternatively you can hand it to Peter at the next breakfast meeting.

**Please click [HERE](#) to download a copy of the Membership form from our website.**

## Club 2014/15 Event Schedule

| Date  | Event                                | Location           |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Friday to Sunday,<br>January 23 to 25, 2015 | Vancouver International<br>Bike Show | Tradex/Abbotsford  |
| Sunday, February 1, 2015                    | Monthly Gathering                    | Chequered Flag     |
| Sunday, February 15, 2015                   | MSF Rider Training                   | TBD                |
| Saturday, February 21, 2015                 | Pot Luck – Chez Lucy's               | 620 Toronto Street |
| Saturday, March 7, 2015                     | Monthly Gathering                    | Log House Pub      |
| Sunday, March 15, 2015                      | MSF Rider Training                   | TBD                |



# BMW Motorcycle Club of Ottawa

Advanced Rider Training (ART) School - Monday, **25 May 2015**  
Calabogie Motorsports Park – a Rain or Shine Event!

The BMW Motorcycle Club of Ottawa will present a one-day **Advanced Rider Training (ART) School** program for novice and intermediate riders, Monday, **May 25, 2015** at Calabogie Motorsports Park.

## Program: ARTS 2015 is for you if you:

- want to improve your skill and confidence in cornering at highway speeds;
- want to improve your bike handling skills by learning from both theory and practice;
- think that you can learn from instructor/ coaches with proven track experience.

**Objective:** the objective of our program is to maximize cornering skill development. The program will include classroom sessions and supervised track sessions.

**Groups:** Riders will be grouped according to skill level. All class time, control, monitoring and assessments will be led by coaches with safe riding training and track / race experience. If you are a cautious or less-experienced rider, please let us know and we'll make absolutely sure you're riding with a compatible group.

**Riding Apparel:** All riders must wear approved full-face helmets, one- or two-piece motorcycle-specific armoured riding suits, gloves and boots.

**Note:** All motorcycles must also pass a pre-track Technical Inspection and Sound Check.

**Registration and Cost:** This year's price is **\$275.00** for paid-up members of any BMWCC Club; **\$300.00** for all others. Registration is limited to 45 and closes **May 1, 2015**. Late entries will be considered only if space permits. Make cheques payable to **BMW Motorcycle Club of Ottawa**; mail to: P.O. Box 8503 Main Terminal, Ottawa, ON, K1G\_3H9. **As this is a Rain or Shine event, no cancellations will be accepted after May 1st; however, substitutions will be allowed if suitable replacement riders are available.**

**ATTENTION.** The liability **insurance coverage** included in the ART School fee is for the benefit of Calabogie MotorSports Park and the BMW Motorcycle Club of Ottawa. If you have any questions concerning your personal insurance coverage for advanced rider training school programs, you should contact your insurance agent.

**For more information, contact the following members of the ART Committee:**

**Tony Street**  
**Don Dobson**  
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