

MARCH 2021

NORCAL NEWS



Ride to Camp

Camp to Ride



BMW MOTORCYCLE CLUB OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Presidents Column

To highlight the significant uncertainty for the club being able to hold group campouts, right after we published the February newsletter with our expected group sites, I received notice that our reservation for Lake Sonoma for our Octoberfest as well as Gurnsey Creek for July was cancelled. We were able to book a group site new French Meadows reservoir as a replacement for July but are still unable to find a suitable site for the Oktoberfest. The situation with group sites is very fluid and there are very few sites taking reservations.

We are almost full for the Death Valley Campout for the individual sites we reserved for the club March 26th to 28th. If you are interested and there are no spaces available, sign up for the waiting list and we will try and accommodate you with last minute cancellations. There are also first come first serve sites nearby if we don't have space available. So far this looks like a go! As far as the 49er, weather permitting, the Board will be meeting March 6th at 10 am at Motoguild in San Francisco to discuss a go/no go as well as ideals for alternative club events. We will be meeting outside due to the pandemic so if you are interested in showing up, bring a camp chair.

As an alternative, if this becomes a problem, I think our plan will be to set up campouts where we can reserve individual sites ahead of time and go with the flow. It's likely we will announce specific camp locations well in advance and ask a group of our members to book individual reservations that we

can share. It's not ideal and significantly more expensive but may be our only option for a while. Also, it does look like there may be lots of crowded campgrounds this summer which may also impact us if our group sites get cancelled. If anyone knows of private properties where we might be able to camp or out of the way campsites that are first come first serve or great dispersed camping, we should consider please drop me an email.

Since the Winter surge seems to be over and counties are reducing their restrictions, we're going to get our second Sunday rides going again. We may increase the frequency as well. We have a Sunday ride posted for Sunday March 14. We will start at the Starbucks across from Costco in Cordelia then stop at Genova Deli in Napa to pick up a sandwich and stop at Skyline Wilderness Park a few miles away to each lunch and socialize. Check out all the details on our site.

Be sure and make to check out the BMW National Rally in Great Falls Montana June 24th to June 27th. I am sure it will be a great event even with various accommodations that will need to be made due to the pandemic. There is so much great riding from between here and Great Falls. Be sure and let us know if you are planning to attend by signing up on our events page. We are going to plan a few club related events at the rally you won't want to miss.

Kevin Coleman

Editors Corner

Massive thanks to everyone who responded to my pleading message for content last month. Looking at the calendar we have a couple of events coming up in March, so we should have fresh content but please continue to contribute - I really cant do this by myself.

First off I would like to thank B.Jan for his thought provoking article hypothesizing why car drivers seem to be unable to see motorcycles.

Next a big thank you to Delf Hedde for his story of his January ride to Death Valley to seek out the strange and unusual. It is particularly appropriate given we has a club camp out there in

March. The pictures are really good, all taken on an iphone 12pro. Definitely a few things there that I would like to see. Thanks also to Steve Kesinger for writing up his ride around the Delta ferries.

Greg Hutchinson, who sits on the BMW MOA Foundation board wrote an interesting article explaining the origins of the organization and exactly what it does.

Please keep the content coming. Ride Safe. Check out events on the last page. First time in a year.

John Ellis

Alan Huntzinger Update



Jorgen Larson, Kevin Coleman and Hugo Bonilla stopped by Alan Huntzinger's house with a "get well" card from the club. Alan is in great spirit. His heart valve replacement happened on 2/23 and he left hospital the next day. He is feeling fine and actually went out for breakfast on the Saturday after the operation.

Ed Perry proudly stands between his matching 1991 and 2021 Bumble Bees



Get Horizontal by B. Jan

According to the Hurt Report, 43% of all motorcycle accidents occur as a result of an oncoming vehicle turning left across the path of a rider. Drivers simply fail to recognize the motorcyclist's right of way. Their typical lament is "I just didn't see him". You might lament "How the hell is that possible, you were looking right at me, you zoned-out space cadet!"

Some motorcyclists may think that drivers deliberately choose not to see us. They feel that drivers resent us because of our agility, acceleration, or designer leathers. Others suspect that some car drivers must be homicidal psychopaths who compensate for their fear of living by driving to kill.

In the urban rain forests of LA or New York, that may be true. But elsewhere, most drivers really don't see motorcycles. Well yes, their eyes see us, but the image doesn't register in the brain. Why is that?

Some psychologists have postulated that the brain is an organ which selects, rather than collects information. They believe that if all the information collected by the senses were to register, the brain would blow a fuse. The conscious mind simply doesn't have enough ram to register all the billboards, road signs, bumper stickers, license plates, car models, tree types, etc. without sensory overload.

To prevent that, the brain organizes the world into systems; those which are important to the activity at hand, and those which aren't. The car driver's brain has learned to exclude all non-essentials, and focus only on those things which might be a threat to survival. On the road, those things are predominantly other cars. Because cars are much wider than they are tall, the brain systematizes threats as objects characterized by horizontal lines.

Things characterized by vertical lines are eliminated from consciousness as non-threatening, extraneous information. Trees, lamp standards, sign posts, bridge abutments, buildings; none of these vertical objects are liable to jump out in front of the driver to threaten his existence.

Along comes a motorcycle. The driver's eyes give it a quick visual scan and the brain determines that this too is a vertical object. No threat. No further focus required. Zone out. Continue replay of last night's debauchery. The next thing you know, the driver turns left across your lane even though you can see him looking right at you!

In my early days of riding, an experienced rider hammered at me ceaselessly with the message that "You are invisible out there!" All I heard him say was "Be careful". I didn't understand at the time that he was saying "To most car drivers, you are literally invisible."

Any rider with experience knows that he is right. Many a novice rider has departed the corporal world because he rode his bike the way he drove his car; as if he could be seen.

If you don't want to **be** horizontal, **look** horizontal. How do we do that? One way is to use running lights. That gives some sense of horizontal perspective to car drivers. Harley riders have known that for half a century. Many Harleys have a pair of white driving lights alongside of the headlight.

A single headlight does not give a sense of perspective, and therefore tends to disappear into the background. I replaced the stock signal lights on the front of my Roadster with 4" round signal/running lights. They immediately and dramatically improved the etiquette of the other users of the road. Some riders have disparaged the aesthetics of my "police" lights. I find the impromptu installation of an SUV grill less attractive.

I've also converted the rear signal lights to signal/running lights. As with the additional front lights, they made an immediate improvement in the etiquette of other road users.

I realized the importance of rear running lights when I was following a friend home one dark evening. To my surprise, rather than focusing on his bike's tail light and spacing myself accordingly, I soon found myself gauging my distance from the rear end of the car ahead of him. His pathetic little taillight simply dissolved into the brighter lights of the car, and his bike effectively disappeared.

If this can happen to a fellow rider, you can be sure it will happen to car drivers who are not attuned to motorcycles.

So, get horizontal. Convert your signal lights into signal/running lights. If you are going to apply reflective tape to your bike, jacket or helmet, make horizontal or diagonal lines rather than vertical ones. Add bright, reflective material to the backside of both mirrors.

Most of all, negotiate our streets and highways as if you are literally invisible.



Delta Ferry Ride

When pilots are stuck on the ground together, they commence “hanger flying” usually with lots of hand gestures. Not unlike riders stuck home while watching it pour down outside, so maybe we can call this “garage riding!” Don a helmet and follow along.

Last July amidst the shutdown, my friend and fellow Nor Cal member Gene Austin called to say he needed to go for a ride and had an idea. He wanted to ride one or more of the ferries in the delta that are part of the CA highway system so they are operated by Cal Trans, and are free. Another Nor Cal member, Ken Castleman joined us to make it a threesome. We met in the east bay, and as I knew where they were I was appointed to lead, so off we went to the Antioch Bridge and Hwy 160 north to Rio Vista.



A bit farther north and onto hwy 220 east to the J Mack ferry which crosses Steamboat Slough. The J-Mack is a 92-foot long by 32-foot wide cable drawn ferry and can carry up to six vehicles. But this day it wasn't operating because there wasn't a “Captain” available to pilot it. Something about the Covid-19 no doubt! I found it interesting that the two ferries are so similar in size and purpose, yet so different. One connected to a cable, and the other free with great mobility.



So we road on up river, but stopped short of Sacramento in Clarksburg where we found a picnic table and parking in the shade of some large trees for our lunch stop. We'd agreed to brown bag it as we didn't know what we'd be able to find open. A perfect place to rest and refuel our bods! This was close enough to Sacramento, so we turned back south and rode more levee roads until reaching Grand Island.

The first ferry is just north of there on hwy 84. It's the Real McCoy II and crosses the Cache Slough onto Ryer Island. The Real McCoy II is 88-foot long by 38-foot wide. It is powered by a hydraulic propulsion system, with 360 degree propellers for steering. The hull's capacity is 80,000 pounds, and can carry up to eight vehicles. We had it all to ourselves this day, but it can carry a lot more motorcycles, as in this view of a club ride in 2017!

There we found the Grand Island Mansion which warranted another stop. Here's what the website has to say: This four-story Italian Renaissance style villa is 24,000 square feet, with 58 rooms and was the centerpiece of Louis W. Meyers' personal empire. It was completed in 1920. That means it was built while WWI was going on! It's available for weddings and large corporate parties, or will be after the lock down is over.



We headed back on more levee roads mostly on the opposite side of the ones we rode up on until once again crossing the Antioch Bridge where we all headed off toward our homes. It was a great day of riding, some great scenery, and to see some

friends while keeping the proper distance and using masks too. So it can be done!
Ride safe and free:

Steve Kesinger



When renting a motorcycle - Take care to read the small print

I have mentioned before I subscribe to Motorcycle Sport and Leisure, a monthly British motorcycle magazine. Every month there is a "touring section" where readers/riders submit article about trips and rides. For some reason anybody in the UK who comes to the states chooses to ride Route 66 and it seems like a new one shows up every other month.



I don't normally read these but this one caught my eye.

This poor guy, rented a Harley Davidson from EagleRider (which is apparently a division of Harley-Davidson). He paid \$3820.71 for a 19-day hire, of which \$1234.34 was for the highest possible level of insurance cover.

He had got roughly halfway and unfortunately hit a concrete block in the middle of a freeway. Remarkably he managed to stay upright but his front wheel suffered a nasty ding, and the bike was unrideable. He managed eventually to get a tow truck to take him and the machine to the nearest Harley dealer. They were helpful but then a representative of the rental company EagleRider instructed the dealer to take the bike away from him. Apparently, by having the accident he had breached EagleRider's Terms and Conditions. He was basically stranded in a foreign country pretty much in the middle of

nowhere.

Interestingly the Terms and Conditions were not the ones of the web site but included in a separate 10-page contract that was only sent out after the booking was made.

Under these circumstances he was essentially forced into purchasing a new contract to allow him to complete the trip. The money he paid previously was gone with the termination of the previous contract.

So there you have it – if you need to rent a bike than ask the question "what happens if I have an accident?" and read the small print

John Ellis

DEATH VALLEY'S WEIRD, WONDERFUL, AND SIMPLY STRANGE SIGHTS

The mysterious “Wandering Rocks” of the Racetrack Playa in Death Valley have fascinated me for a long time. Even though I have been to Death Valley a number of times, I never made it to the Race Rack Playa. At first, I just did not trust my offroad riding, later I always seemed to have different things on the agenda.

At the end of January, California had been in another lockdown for more than 6 weeks. Definitely time to get out on a trip. This was supposed to be desert riding

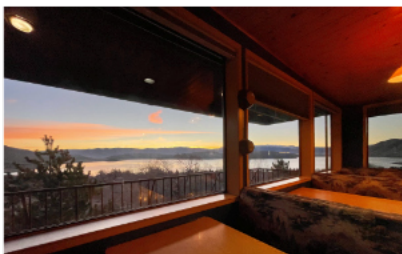
The shortest way from the Bay Area to Nevada leads over Hwy 88 and on January 20 a weather window seemed to open up to for to make it over the Sierra. The mid-week ride up to the mountains was beautiful and there was very little traffic. At a quick stop at the Kirkwood Ski resort, it turned out, that I was the “strange thing: Quite a few folks were excited to see me on a motorcycle and asked me how I transported my skis on the bike....

BY DELF HEDDE



Going down the east side of the Sierra in the shade of the mountains was cold – but thankfully quick. Thank God for heated grips and a heated Jacket!

Due to the cold nighttime temperatures, I had decided to forego camping on this trip on splurge on heated hotel rooms with hot showers. The Topaz Lake Resort fit that bill quite nicely. I was able to park my bike on a barbeque spot right in front of my door. Due to the pandemic, the hotel was very empty. There was only one other dinner guest – so social distancing was certainly not a problem.



At breakfast (2 other guests), we were treated to a beautiful sunrise. Getting on the bike at 07:30 the temperature was 26 degree Fahrenheit. It is easy to forget that the lake is still on 5000 ft altitude.

The ride along Nevada 208 through the Smith Valley and over the Pine Mountains was stunningly beautiful. I have to admit that I did not really enjoy riding through the Walker River Canyon – due to the shaded roadway, there was a lot of black ice.

Once I hit the 95 the riding became relaxed again. Walker Lake was beautiful under the blue winter sky. After fuel stops in

season – but no hotels or campgrounds could be booked.

Fortunately, the restrictions in Nevada were less strict. So, why not plan a trip to Death Valley, riding down and exploring the Nevada side, instead of usual route down the 5 and 58?

As it was my goal to visit the “strange” wandering rocks of the racetrack playa, it thought it would be fun to look for more strange and usual sights on the way.

Hawthorne (According to the signage this is home to the world's largest ammunition depot: more than 250 square miles with more than 2500 storage bunkers) and Tonopah, I was on my way to the first truly strange and interesting site: The International Car Forest of the Last Church.

A short dirt road just south of Goldfield leads to this amazing art installation that was created by local artists Chad Sorg and Mark Rippie. More than 40 cars, vans, trucks and buses have been balanced on their ends or stacked on top of each other. While there are similar exhibits like the Texas Cadillac Ranch, or Nebraska's Carhenge, it is believed that the International Car Forest is the biggest one in the country. There are no signs naming or explaining the work, just a small booth with a visitor log and a plea for donations. The area is fairly large, and I had a blast exploring in the dirt with my GS in this “druidic henge of junkers”.



The next site to visit was the Angel's Ladies plane wreck north of Beatty. A promotional stunt for the brothel went very wrong, and the plane has been sitting in the desert since 1978. The

brothel has long since closed but the plane still provides a nice photo opp.



Last stop for the day were the strange sculptures of the Goldwell Open Air Museum close to then ghost town of Rhyolite.



To stay on topic, I stayed in Beatty at the Atomic Inn with its extraterrestrial theme.



The first 65 miles to the Ubehebe crater are well paved – but I had no idea what the conditions on Racetrack Valley Road would be. So I left the hotel at sunrise.

As it turned out, the road had

recently been graded. Instead of the feared wash boarding, I had to deal with gravel that was a bit deeper than I am really comfortable, with as well as the rocks hidden in that gravel. The best way to deal with this seemed to be maintaining some speed and trusting my steering damper. That worked really well, even though I had to remind myself that I was on my own in the middle of nowhere and hadn't seen any other vehicles yet. Not a good time or place for a crash.

After 21 miles of this, I arrived at Teakettle Junction. Definitely a strange place! A crossroads in the middle of nowhere with a road sign full of teakettles...



At the junction the new grading ended, and I was able to enjoy the wash boarding that this road is famous for. Again – maintaining speed seemed to be the best solution. After nine miles of trying to shake my bike to pieces, I arrived at my goal: The Racetrack Playa parking lot.

The playa and wandering rocks were every bit as fascinating and beautiful as I had hoped for. I was able to spend about an hour completely on my own wandering the playa and taking pictures of the rocks, before the first 4*4s arrived and I had to share the site.





The ride back was exhausting but uneventful. The biggest concern were cars and truck blasting around blind corners – but all in all I probably did not see more than 10 vehicles.



When I arrived back at the Ubehebe Crater, the wind was so strong, that I could not put my bike on the sidestand. The winter storm was getting close.

Having achieved my long-time goal to see the Wandering Rocks with my own eyes, I celebrated this achieved with some beer and chili at the Happy Burro.

My initial plan was to head home the next day – but there was heavy snowfall in the Sierra and even Tehachapi Pass was



closed due to snow. I decided to stay another night and visit some more strange as well as some familiar places.

The day started with a number of failures:

I wanted to visit Aguerberry Point – another site that has been on my list for a long time, but at breakfast a ranger told me, that the road was closed due to snowfall the previous night.

Next on the list was the Amorgosa Big Dune- but after taking a couple of dirt naps, my bike convinced me that my sand riding skills are not up to that stuff yet.

The World's Biggest Firecracker was an easy site to visit, so was the Big Bovine of the desert (*ed: see front cover*).



The road to Dante's View is always fun – even though it was just 19 degree Fahrenheit at 5500 ft. Definitely strange to be able to ride from that altitude to Badwater, the lowest point in the US at minus 280 ft, in a little more than 30 minutes.

The strange colors of Artists Palette and the Natural Bridge (How did I end up in Utah??) allowed me to stay on topic.



The final site for this visit to DVNP was the Keane Wonder Mine – another place that I had not visited before. The dirt road to the mine was an absolute delight and there were definitely some

“strange” sites to be found – like the outhouse with a view in the middle of nowhere.

On Sunday it was finally time to head back home. As the Sierra was being hit hard by the snowstorm, Tehachapi was my only choice. Taking the 190, Trona Wildrose Road, I finally ended up on 58 and 5 for the long freeway ride home. I got lucky to make it over Tehachapi under grey skies and there was no rain until Pacheco Pass – only a few miles from home.

All in all, an excellent midwinter adventure with many “Strange Sights”. I can’t wait for the club campout in March to explore more of those.

Delf Hedde



Thanks for the Memories

It’s hard to believe that five years have passed since I negotiated my way through the Cal Trans bureaucracy and secured the club a nice two mile stretch, on a very busy section of US 101. It was a happy time when we finally got our sign made and mounted and received our vests, hard hats and encroachment permits. And once Fred Montañó, Steve Kesinger and I completed the Cal Trans Safety Officer training, we were ready to keep the section of 101 we adopted looking sharp with monthly cleanups.

When I took this on I committed to running it for five years. The time has ended and we have no one to take it over, so our sign will soon come down. But it has been a very worthwhile experience. I think we have contributed to keeping a small section of our great state clean and in the process created some fond memories. I greatly appreciate all the volunteers over the years who viewed the videos, gave their time and came out and walked the freeway, picking up garbage. Thank you! Though it was tedious and hot at times, there was a lot of camaraderie and some great lunches afterward. I want to give a special thanks to John Ellis and Fred Montañó who contributed more than their share. In fact, I don’t think Fred ever missed a single cleanup day.

If a club member ever wants to participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program, I would be glad to assist and pass on what we learned.

Ed Perry



The MOA Foundation Explained

I think most Club members are familiar with the BMW MOA from the monthly magazine and National Rally but there's another part of MOA that hasn't had the same visibility.

For over 20 years, the BMW MOA Foundation has sponsored programs related to experienced rider training, new rider education, and outreach programs for younger and female riders. The organization has helped subsidize the NorCAL Advanced training courses and the Adventure Riding courses taught at the 49er.

This is the story of the vision, dedication, and hard work that created this organization.

On September 7, 2000, a new non-profit educational foundation named the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America Foundation was approved as a tax-exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service.

After a meeting of BMW club presidents at the International Rally in Fredericksburg, Texas, in 1997, BMW MOA Ambassador Clark Luster approached BMW MOA President Jeff Dean about the possibility of creating a tax-exempt foundation for motorcycle enthusiasts. Luster, who was the executive director for Presley Ridge Schools, a non-profit foundation for underprivileged children, imagined that motorcyclists might appreciate the opportunity to make tax-deductible gifts to an organization dedicated to the advancement of safety and education in motorcycling. Dean agreed.

During the following winter, Luster presented the idea to Jeff Dunkle, the treasurer of the BMW MOA. Dunkle arranged for Luster to get a slot on the agenda of the next MOA board of directors meeting, which was scheduled to meet at the American Motorcyclist Association headquarters in Westerville, Ohio, in April, 1998.

Luster outlined his concept to the MOA board, and asked for permission to form a task force to explore the feasibility of the creation of a new foundation. The MOA board unanimously approved the creation of a task force, and Luster returned home to Pittsburgh, realizing he had created a world of work for himself and other supporters of the concept. His next step was to prepare a presentation for the 1998 MOA International Rally in Missoula, Montana, which resulted in MOA President Dean appointing a feasibility task force consisting of himself, Luster, D.J. Douglas, Mike White, Jeff Dunkle, Charles Peters, and Roger Wiles. Luster reported the formation of the task force at the annual Ambassador dinner, receiving an enthusiastic reaction.

Luster hosted the first meeting of the task force in the conference room of Pressley Ridge Schools in Pittsburgh on April 20, 1998. With the assistance of attorney Carolyn Duronio, the group spent a day brainstorming and planning how to launch the new foundation. The following goals were established:

- Create a national educational facility including a library, archives, museum, and hall of fame.
- Provide training in riding skills, safety and leadership.
- Promote programs for first-time riders with an emphasis on youth, women, and minorities.
- Establish a clearinghouse for the redistribution of motorcycles, equipment, and supplies.
- Respond positively to new and creative initiatives from the members.

Since that time, and through the efforts of many volunteers, and after many false starts and set backs, the Foundation has worked hand-in-hand with the Board of the BMW MOA to evolve into what is now the fundraising arm of the MOA. The Foundation is now responsible for generating the money used to pay for the courses and educational opportunities offered by the MOA's Rider Performance University (RPU).

The MOA is constantly moving forward with most of the initial goals through donations, legacy gifts, and volunteers.

From the Camp Gears events held at the National Rallies directed to younger riders, rider training subsidization, to the establishment of an beginning BMW Motorcycle Museum at the North American BMW Headquarters in Greer, SC.

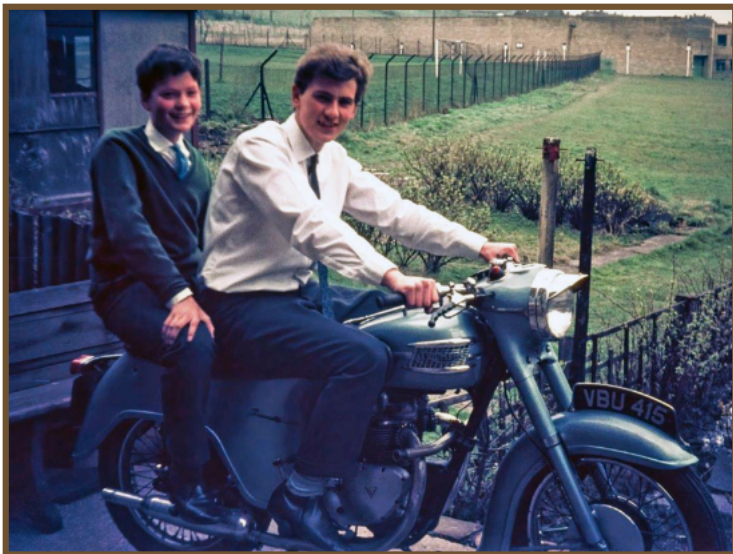
At the last BMW MOA Foundation BoD meeting this past January, the focus is being more clearly defined around rider education, safety, and the first steps of a real BMW motorcycle museum. The year 2020 was highly disruptive across the US and for BMW events. The surprising result was a decrease in expenses AND an increase in donations. A redefined detailed short and long term planning session was approved to provide specific goals and steps to keep moving forward. If you would like to know more about the organization and its goals, or have an interest in supporting the future of the Foundation's vision, please feel free to reach out to me for more information.

<https://www.bmwmoa.org/page/foundationhome>

Sincerely,

Greg Hutchinson

BMW MOA Ambassador/Foundation



Ken Kastle Challenge

Back in May 2020 Ken Kastle suggested that Norcal members should send in their earliest picture of themselves on a motorcycle. Of course Ken won the competition with a video of himself on his uncle's bike when he was only 5 years old.

My brother Ken who lives in England has been scanning in family slides and came across this one. Here is yours truly sitting on a recently purchased 1960 Triumph 21, in about 1967. My brother is on the back. The picture was taken in the back yard of our house in Bradford, Yorkshire.

Believe it or not, in 1969 the bike was stolen from outside some digs I was staying in Birmingham by an escapee from a youth correctional facility. I had bought a replacement by the time it was recovered.

John Ellis



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Safetydirector@bmwnorcal.org

and we will keep you informed as of when the goal is reached.

We have all heard stories from riders who used the Helite Airbags and can attest the to the product performance. From slow falls to high speed crashes, riders claim that if they hadn't used the Helite Airbag, they would have been in much worse shape.

The holidays are upon us, and what better way to treat yourself - you deserve it.

Regards

Jorgen Larsen

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CONTACTS

PRESIDENT*

Kevin Coleman
(president@bmwnorcal.org) (925) 890-8449

VICE-PRESIDENT*

Jeff Zane
(vicepresident@bmwnorcal.org) (415) 948-4329

SECRETARY*

Mike Murphy
(secretary@bmwnorcal.org) (310) 497-0618

TREASURER*

Hugo Bonilla
treasurer@bmwnorcal.org (650) 534-8739

TOUR CAPTAIN*

Nick Gloyd
(tourcaptain@bmwnorcal.org) (707) 849-5582

SAFETY/TECH DIRECTOR*

Jorgen Larson
(safetytech@bmwnorcal.org) (870) 273-4746

HISTORIAN*

Rick Webb
(historian@bmwnorcal.org) (707) 494-6629

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

John Ellis
(newseditor@bmwnorcal.org) (925) 918 3106

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Russ Drake
(twobeemers@aol.com) (510) 427-3309

ADVERTISING CHAIR

Manny Rubio
(Adchair@bmwnorcal.org) (925) 784-4856

SECOND SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Mark Rodda
(ssbr@bmwnorcal.org) (650) 213-6253

*Board Member

EVENTS

March 6th Board Meeting 10 am at MotoGuild in San Francisco

March 14th SSBR Meet at Starbucks in Cordellia across from Costcto at 5121 Business Center Dr #108, Fairfield, CA 94534 at 9am.

March 26-28th Death Valley Campout. Due to space restrictions you MUST reserve a place on NorCal web site

April 30, 2021 to May 02, 2021 Central Cal Spring Fling 2021 Location: American River Resort in Coloma. Pre-registration is a requirement. No walk ups. Register at www.cabr.org. \$65. Open to non-members

Anniversaries

January	Prasad Gottam	5
	Jim Lucas	10
	Mary-Anna Rae	10
	Lars Swartz	30
	Allan Williams	30
February	Craig Reppe	5
March	Dave Brakebill	10
	Barth Campbell	5
	Martin Cazares	5
	Mike Crawford	30
	Dave Gluss	35
	Stuart Henshal	5
	Terry Kieb	40
	John Parodi	20
	Javier Sanchez	10

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