

Notes on Spokes

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MHSC Racing at
Lebanon

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TIDBITS

COLORADO

Some of the Ozark Mountain Trail Riders are heading out to Colorado for a semi-official/semi-organized vacation. Mark the week of August 12th as a week of vacation on your calendars. If you want to go, you can get there when you want, leave when you want and choose to participate in whatever is going on. But here is what we've been talking about. Shawn Hall is going to race the MHSC race in Polo, MO on 8/11. Once the race is over, he's going to pack up and start heading west. He hopes to get to Abilene, KS to rest for the night. Monday will be a travel day to Pitkin, CO. *This week, by the way, is the only open week Shawn has all summer!*

I plan on taking a group of motorcycles on a long tough loop on Tuesday. I can map out some things for folks to do around Pitkin on ATVs and smaller bikes.

Then, on Wednesday, it will be a real easy ride to Tincup and up to Mirror Lake (if we have the time). By easy ride, I mean passable by truck. (My wife Linda is going to ride the trail Buick and I don't want her mad at me the rest of the week for taking her on a tough trail.) We need to be back to Pitkin by early afternoon to pack up and head to Spring Creek Reservoir.

Shawn's going to lead us on a loop around Spring Creek on Thursday. On Friday, we're talking about whitewater rafting.

So that's it, we've got things planned Tuesday through Friday. If you want to get there early or stay late, great. Of course, between now and then a lot can happen. I'll keep you posted.

**The Next OMTRA Meeting:
Mazzio's in Ozark
March 21 at 7PM
Buffet: \$2.99**

OMTRA

If you haven't noticed already, this issue is very full. I even took out the OMTRA page. But there was a meeting at Diamond Head Restaurant in Springfield last month. I was late to the meeting. There was a good turnout. Unfortunately, I didn't catch much of the meeting

itself. They were talking about combining the OMTRA and the Hillbilly web sites.

BJEC

I got the following off the BJEC Website Forum:

The BJEC Enduro scheduled for 04/28/02 Will Not be held at Claremore Ok. Instead the event will be held at the site of the proposed Scipio off-road park. The ranch is located about 25 miles north of McAlester OK. The terrain is quite diverse and can sometimes be very challenging. At this time we plan on scoring the event using standard enduro rules. Look for more details in the future. Thanks, Steve Travis

AHSCS

The first race of the Arkansas Hare Scramble series got under way on February 24. Over 200 riders took part in the motorcycle part of the event. Picture perfect weather greeted riders on the day of the event. However, previous rains made parts of the 6.5 mile course "bike suckers." For more information and results, see

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Bob Diffie celebrated his 50th birthday at Chadwick. I can't think of a better place to celebrate one's birthday.

Hillbilly Heaven

By Bob Fuerst

For the final race of the 2001-2002 season, we were going to be on Spud's home turf. The landowner for this race was the one and only Ken Simons, Kreg and Jon's dad. And Shawn Hall calls this place "Fight Club" after the movie. The movie is about this place where people go to get hurt and like it.

I'd never ridden this trail, but with its reputation and the fact that Spud cut the trail, I imagined this goat trail with no branches trimmed higher than 5'4" off the ground. Boy, I was proven wrong. The trail was tough but very rideable. Spud must have taken a step ladder to the woods cause the trail was clipped very well.

I think there were about 100 bikes and 60 ATVs. The weather was good for riding, but cold, damp and windy for the spectators. During the riders' meeting, Spud mentioned that if the trail was marked to go down the creek, you were to stay in the creek. Of course, he said, with most of the creeks it wasn't going to be a problem. The sides of the creeks were 3 or 4 foot tall walls. There weren't going to be any course cutters at this race.

I'm racing in the Senior class, which starts pretty close to the back of the grid. By the time we were a half a mile into the first loop, it was all stop. Bottleneck! Rumor has it the bottleneck started with the intermediates and every class on back had to deal with it.

I had my own personal experience with the hill. On my first attempt, I had to try a path less followed, with the main lines all backed up. I ran out of the big mo, momentum that is. Which is like money, hard to attain and easy to spend. Anyhow, I got the bike sideways on the hill and ran out of leg. Which Spud said, I can't believe you're tell-



Shawn Hall takes on Fight Club

ing anyone that. Anyhow, there I was with this 280 pound motorcycle laid over on the hill, heavy side down. It pretty much exhausted me picking the bike up. At least I had that button. I discussed this with Steve Wilkenson after the race. Steve was almost jealous. You see, Steve races an XR650. It's heavier and no electric start. And he saw the whole thing.

Attempt number two: pretty much a repeat of the first.

Attempt number three: I made it about ¾ of the way up the hill. I got the bike parked behind some trees and tried to get my breath before trying to complete the hill. Somebody got just a little further on the hill when they lost control. They acted like the bike hit neutral. It turned 180 degrees and t-boned me, knocking me over, heavy side down, again. At least there were about three folks there to help pick up the bike. But I got to thinking about it. If I wasn't there, the bike in neutral with rider would have gone straight down the hill. It could have been disastrous.



Kreg Simons ducks under the root heading into check.

Once I got going, I realized my now broken headlight shell wasn't going to make it. It almost made the bike unrideable. Fortunately, I found some friends on the side of the course, ripped the headlight the

(Continued on page 11)

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WUDI 4

Bob's big adventure, part I. In last's month's issue, I said I was planning to take my RV to work on Thursday, February 21st. Then, head to the OMTRA meeting, then to Chadwick for the WUDI ride and then to Lebanon for the first Missouri Hare Scramble Championship race. Well, my plans got changed earlier in the week. I managed to put a hole in my radiator hose. And Thursday, after work I headed to Lebanon Suzuki to pick up a new one. Since I had to work on the bike and I wasn't loaded up and my week was so busy and it was going to be so cold and so forth and so on, I didn't head to Chadwick until Friday morning.

This was the fourth annual WUDI ride. A bunch of folks that converse on this internet thang called rec.motorcycle.dirt all year long get together once a year for this campout/trail ride. Not everybody that belongs to rec.motorcycle.dirt comes to the ride. But there were people from all over. I talked to riders from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, Texas and Ohio. I wasn't there for the whole thing, so there were probably folks from



John "john" ???, John "jeb" Brunsgaard, Christine Hall and Stewart "Two Toes Gone" Hall

some other states as well.

When I got there this trials rider guy named Bentley was trying to fix Stewart Hall's Gas Gas. Bentley broke the brake lever. And he was trying to make a shorty lever out of it. He did. He also called Jim Cook, of Smackover Motorsports, and asked him to bring him a new one to replace Stewart's broken one. Maybe by this time Stewart's thinking that if enough people ride his Gas Gas, he'll have a new bike. Piece by piece of course.

It's about 3:00 pm by this time and there was another group getting ready to head out. So I suited up and played leader for a loop. There was one guy 38 years old from Nebraska on a WR400, but the rest were kids on motocrossers. There were three of them. One didn't even have bark-busters. They kept saying the trees were awful close together. But they did just fine. The kid without bark-busters had only been riding two years and he made it up some pretty tough hills. After about 10 miles, they started pointing to their gas tanks. Oh well, let's see if we can get them back to camp before we start pushing.

It's getting dark. Time to start a fire, get out of my riding gear and think about food. I got the fire started and got into my street clothes. Then sat down by the fire with my favorite liquid beverage. I hadn't got as far as the food thing when Christine, the Cookie Goddess, asks if I would like to join Stewart and her for dinner. Make that a steak dinner. I already knew Christine has achieved AA status in the world of cooking. So she didn't have to ask twice. Thank you, Christine.

Then, back to the campfire. I didn't know most of these folks, but it wasn't much different than any other dirt bike campout.

The next morning, I didn't get the earliest of starts, but I did lead two riders from St. Louis and one from Minnesota on a loop. I thought one of the guys from St. Louis was mad at me when he baled out and went back to camp. I forgot how steep that hill got. Sorry. That left

(Continued on page 5)

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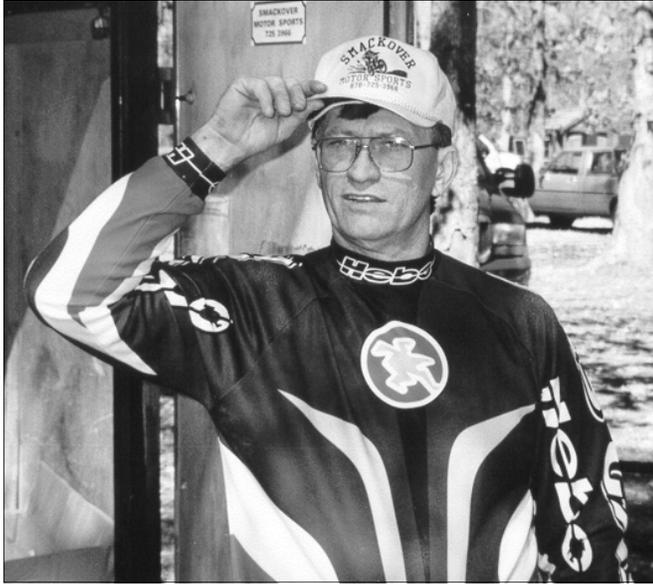
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Jim "wudsracer" Cook

three of us. After bopping around for a little while, the other guy from St. Louis, hadn't caught up with us. The rider from Minnesota was on a new CRF450 and we kinda got rat racing. After we waited

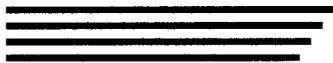
for some time at an intersection, I headed backwards to see what happened. I'm not a big fan of this, since we were on a two track and I've heard more than one story about the rider trying to catch up going as fast as he can and having a head on with the rider going back for him. Lucky, I did find him. He had put a hole in his radiator hose with the clamp holding his skid plate on. Luckily, he could shorten the hose when he got back to camp and continue riding. Also, he hadn't lost much coolant and he changed the clamp around so he wouldn't do that again. But we headed back to camp for repairs.

I wasn't back at camp 5 minutes when Terry Brumley shows up with a brand new KTM 250 EXC. He wants to get the jetting sorted out. There aren't many folks around and I only had time for one more short loop before heading out. So Terry and I headed out. I've ridden thousands of miles with Terry. Our pace is pretty close and we both know Chadwick well. Our ride was pretty uneventful. We did see Brian Sharp on the trail and he wanted to know what was going on. It was almost as crowded as the enduro at camp.

When we got back to camp, I met John (Yes, lowercase John, that's how he posts on the internet.) He was on a business trip from Ohio to Arizona and stopped in Springfield to check out WUDI and Chadwick. When I say he stopped in Springfield, I don't mean he was driving through. He was flying. When I asked him when was his departure flight, he said, we flew in on our own plane. And he thought my RV was a home on wheels. It's nice, it but ain't no plane! John brought boots and a helmet. I let him borrow some old riding pants and from what I read, he rode Stewart's Gas Gas as Stewart lead them on a loop. I think Stewart got some new plastic out of this ride.

For me, it was time to pack up, eat some lunch and head out for part II of my big adventure...

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MHSC Season Starts!

....Bob's Big Adventure Part II. The second part of my adventure weekend was the first Missouri Hare Scramble Championship race at Lebanon for 2002. I got there a little early and had my choice of parking spots. Shawn, his son Scotty and a buddy of Scotty's showed up a little later.

Then Steve McWhorter and buddy walked by. Steve went on the Baja trip with Lee Glenn and proceeded to fill us in on the details. Lee promised to e-mail me a story to include in the newsletter, so I won't ruin Lee's story.

That night was a little different than the usual campfire sitting, it was one of the last nights of the winter Olympics and we got to watching the short track speed skating on TV. Talk about bar to bar.

Anyhow, Steve Leivan was the promoter of this race. He outdid himself this time. Even with a broken arm, Steve managed to lay out a 9.5 mile course. It was a tough course. Lots of single track and creek beds. I personally got a bad start. It didn't matter, the course was a lot of fun and I rode my own pace. The weather was turning out to be perfect. There was no dust or mud. It's hard to



John Struckoff, 23, leads the start of the A Class riders

have mud when it's all rocks. My day was a short one after I got a flat on the second lap. Oh well, that's racing.

I watched the remainder of the race. It was a good one for the lead. For the last few laps, the leaders just came through in a freight train.

Over 280 bikes and 160 ATVs showed up to have some fun. Steve Leivan was saying his biggest problem was finding parking spaces for all these folks. Everybody is showing up in RVs and big trailers these days,

thus taking up more space. If that's the worst problem, then things went pretty well. You can see the results at www.chatrats.com

I want to thank Nick Stine for taking some great pictures at the race for the newsletter. Unfortunately, space prevented me from using more of them.

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BAJA BOUND – SEVEN AMIGOS

By Lee Glenn

We trailered the bikes to El Centro, California. On Sunday morning, January 27th, we rode into Mexacalli, Mexico and immediately got lost looking for the visa office. If you're going more than 50 miles in, you need a visa, which cost about \$15.00 or 135 pesos. We eventually found the visa office and then got lost trying to find the road out of



Jay Williams, before broken leg.

town. The traffic in Mexacalli is a nightmare. There are no road signs but people are friendly. A good Samaritan in a Dodge Durango led us to our exit highway.

Baja is full of good Samaritans, just friendly people who wave a lot, flash you the "peace sign" and feel comfortable about dirt bikers from the USA riding through their country.

The Baja peninsula is sparsely populated. You have the heavily populated border towns, a few towns on the Pacific Coast side, a few more really small towns on the Gulf side and nobody in the middle. Baja is two beaches separated by mountains which

go up to 10,000 feet. When you are starting at sea level, that's a long way.

The terrain reminds one of southern California without any of the people. A good part of the off-road riding was on the score course (Baja 500-1000) races.

It's rocky, sandy, whupped out and has 100 mph sand flats. An XR-400 tops out at 90 mph, XR-650R at 100+.

Four of us, Rick Helmick, Rich Niemann, Jim Letellier and myself, Lee Glenn, did 9 days and 1,400 miles; 12 days at 2,700 miles for Jay Williams, Bryan Fick and Steve McWhorter.

On day five, we split up. Why did we split up? Try to follow along.....On day 3, Jay caught his foot in a sand rut. He thought it was sprained. Riding off-road was uncomfortable for him so he was going to ride the pavement. Steve and Byron went with him. As it turns out, Jay's leg was broken in two places. He now has another plate with 13 screws in his leg. Go figure!!

Things you must have in Baja:

- * GPS system with a guide book
- * Large capacity fuel tanks - Gas is available. You just have to ask. We bought gas out of a pick-up truck, behind a taco restaurant and from a 70+-year-old lady who siphoned it out of a barrel. The cost was \$3 to \$4 a gallon.



Rick Helmick shows us the "trees" are a little different south of the border.

take "Bull fighting" lessons and we had nights right on the beach. We met a hotel owner who was friends with Mickey Thompson and still active in Baja racing. We visited Mike's Sky Ranch. The "Sky" is in the name because it's at 4,700 feet. Finally, we stayed in an abandoned resort at 6,000 feet with no running water, a wood burning stove and a pack of dogs sleeping outside the door.

Military checkpoints are scattered throughout Baja. It's just a formality, no big deal. At the vast majority, all the soldiers wanted to see

(Continued from page 7)

* The last thing is "stickers". Everyone wants stickers. We brought zero stickers - Big mistake.

Baja has everything American tourists desire. Tourism is far and away their biggest industry. There is no agriculture, farming or mining to speak of. Tourism is down in Baja so everyone was glad to see us.

Food and motels are comparable to the states in cost and accommodations. We stayed where you could



Rick Helmick, Rich Niemann and Jim Letellier at Mike's Sky Ranch.

were "Wheelies". Rick was the "Wheelie King."

Go to Baja - ride until you are too tired to ride anymore. Eat the food, drink the water, (I drank tap water every day), smile at everybody and have a good time. Just remember that you are a guest in a foreign country so behave like an adult.

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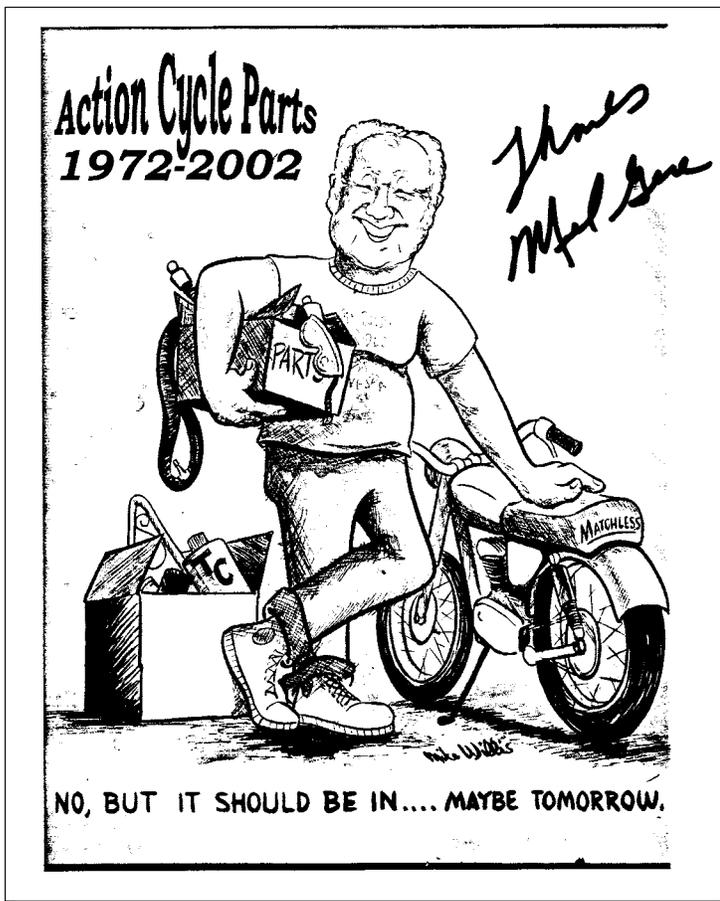
Mel Retires

On February 26, Mel and Carol Gere's son, daughter and daughter-in-law hosted a big get together to celebrate Mel's retirement from Action Cycle. From my rough personal estimate, over 200 people of all ages braved the cold weather to attend.

I think Casey Haynes said it best with his post to the Hillbilly

web site. So, here's Casey's post (without permission):

It was a huge blowout! I could not believe all the people that were there. It was a motorcycle reunion for all involved in the sport over the 30 years. I hope everyone had as much fun as I did. Thanks Mel!



Below is a "thank you" note from Mel and Carol Gere

We really want to thank Doug, Debbie, and Carmel for putting together a great party. We had a great time and will never forget it. We especially want to thank all those who braved the cold and came by. The ones who couldn't make it for family and other reasons, we understand. You all were in our thoughts. The thirty years we spent with our business and friendships we gained have been very fulfilling. We didn't accumulate that million dollar savings account, but all of you are worth a lot more than that to us. We are not going anywhere else so we will see you at the various events and if there is anything we can do to help anyone, let us know.

Sincerely, Mel and Carol Gere

PS If you would like to send Mel a note, his e-mail address is MelGere@aol.com.

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HARE SCRAMBLE!

3/10/02 – Appreciation event for Mel & Carol Gere and Jerry & Ellie Sharp

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4/21/02 – Greg Lowe’s Place, West Plains, MO

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- 4/14/02 – Pine Ridge, Russellville, AR (870) 612-8186
- 5/5/02 – Sturkie Hare Scramble, Sturkie, AR (870) 932-4299 or (870) 477-5214
- 6/2/02- Cedar Creek Grand Prix, Goshen, AR (501) 521-5390
- 6/30/02 – Beech Grove Bandit, Cass, AR (501) 667-4066 or (888) 520-7301
- 8/25/02 – Turkey Ridge, Searcy, AR (501) 843-2836
- 9/8/02 – Frog Pond Hare Scramble, Smackover, AR (870) 725-3966, (870)-725-2328, (870) 612-8186
- 9/22/02 – Possum Trot Hare Scramble, Harrison, AR (870) 741-3131
- 10/13/02 – TO BE ANNOUNCED
- 10/27/02 – Ten Bends (888)-844-9440
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- 3/17/02 – Leadbelt, Park Hills, MO (314) 966-2620
- 3/24/02 – MXP \$\$\$ Columbia, MO (636) 488-3174 or (636) 257-2260
- 4/14/02 – Nasty Creek, Steelville, MO (636) 239-5611
- 4/28/02 – Missouri Mulekicker National, Kahoka, MO (660) 727-3301
- 5/5/02 – Missouri Dirt Riders \$\$\$, Westphalia, MO (636) 942-4884 or (636) 398-4468
- 5/19/02 – Brush Busters \$\$\$, Warrensburg, MO (816) 842-2453 – BIKES ONLY
- 6/2/02 – Blackwater 50 \$\$\$, Marshfield, MO (417) 581-4678 or (417) 581-4544
- 6/16/02 – March of Dimes, Park Hills, MO (636) 942-4884 or (636) 398-4468
- 6/30/02 – Newark \$\$\$, Newark, MO (217) 656-3375 or (217) 224-6626
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- 9/8/02 – Spare Parts, Eugene, MO (573) 395-4655, (573)348-1157, (573)392-3221 – BIKES ONLY
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- 3/24/02 – White Rock, Combs, AR (501) 521-4194 or (501) 267-2683
- 4/28/02 – Tulsa Trail Riders, Claremore, OK (918)- 663-6218
- 5/19/02 – Lead Belt, Park Hills, MO (314) 639-6373 or (314) 510-3243 Email: msilger@ix.netcom.com
- 6/09/02 – Train Robbers, Little Rock, AR (501) 758-4413 or (501) 835-2677
- 6/23/02 – Golden Eagle, Stillwater, OK
- 9/15/02 – Indian Nations, Gruber, OK, Email: jaingram@earthlink.net
- 10/06/02 – Red River, Muenster, TX (940) 387-8123
- 10/20/02 – Hardwood, Chadwick, MO (417) 581-4046 or (417) 833-6672
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rest of the way off and took off.

The rest of the race was fortunately uneventful. The conditions were about perfect. You might almost call it tacky. The end of the course was definitely a no passing zone. The trail dropped into a ditch. Or you might call it a ravine. Anyhow, you couldn't see over the side. The walls on this puppy were about 8 or 10 feet tall. It was narrow first gear stuff. The last corner was a tight right-hander. It was more than a 90 degree corner. It just kept going. You didn't have to worry about not making the corner, the ravine just kind of guided the bike. After you got around the corner, you had to duck under a root! I thought it was a log. But no, it was a live root attached to a large tree! Then, you had to take a shot up the side of the ravine and go a few more yards to the check. This line out of the creek caused a few folks problems; the rider in front of me was sliding down the hill as I was lining up my shot at the hill. After I finished, I got to see Bryson Gott spend some of his dad's money as he cleaned the rear fender off his KTM 200.

The second moto seemed much more uneventful than the first moto. The bottleneck wasn't a problem for most folks. Spud was there with a few folks to help people on the hill. Plus, there were more lines by this time.

Rusty Reynaud did a good job, winning the day and the series—not bad for an old guy.

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