

February 2009

# SANTA BARBARA BMW RIDERS, INC.

[www.sbbmwridders.org](http://www.sbbmwridders.org)

Greetings from a Reno NV laundromat.

It was 52 degrees when I obligingly set out to check on whether any riders would show at Pete's on Sunday Jan 25th. I wasn't planning on riding, but when I encountered Harvey Rawn, Steve Miller, and recent guest from New Hampshire Mark Morong with his wife Ginny we collectively decided to ride Hwy 33 to Wolf's Tavern. What a glorious day with little traffic, great road conditions, and scenery that we are privileged to have in our backyard. Riding with a guest rider two-up unfamiliar with the road gave me an opportunity to consciously practice delaying my apexes, accelerate out of the corners, and push my left-hander lean angles. It's all about establishing muscle memory. It was an all oilhead ride with but a couple of fist sized rocks and several gravel patches. The temperature ranged from a momentary low of 37 degrees at Pine Mtn Pass to 67 on the rebound through Carpinteria.

Several members of our club have been solicited by David Walls to accompany the individual riders in the upcoming Amgen Tour of California time trial stage in the Santa Ynez Valley. David has Moto-Marshalled/Referreed numerous bicycle race throughout the country. Faced with the opportunity to volunteer at a race with world class bicycle riders, I downloaded a map of the 15 mile course and rode it with Lindsley prior to embarking on a major Cribbage sojourn.

Please bring your \$15 yearly dues to the Feb meeting.

Consider yourselves invisible

Cy Madrone



SBBMWRiders meet every 3rd Monday of the month at Sizzler @ 5555 Hollister Avenue in Goleta (Hollister & Kellogg) Dinner is around 6:00 PM and the meeting starts around 7:30.

**Next meeting: Feb. 16th.**

**Cy's Message**

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**Ed's Turn**

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**Pg 2**

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**Pg 2**

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## Ed's Turn

Procrastination will always bite you. I had almost two years to rebuild a Cagiva 650 Elefant and finish the wiring on a Moto Morini 501 Camel. They are both due in less than two weeks. Guess who's burning the midnight oil?

On the other hand, I'm looking forward to spending some riding time in Texas. None of that 37° riding weather for me. It's more like 17 to 30° here. Heated gear has more meaning. I wonder why. The forecast for TX is mid 70's for highs and 50's for lows. I think I can handle that. A week of that climate will rejuvenate me until springtime.

Jim.



**Thanks for hanging out with me at rallies, Dave.**

## BLAKE'S TIPS

On two consecutive days last week I had drivers swoop in across multiple lanes to cut me off. In both cases I saw them coming. I realized that I was in their blind spot, which extended beyond adjacent lanes, and instinctively slowed down in the odd case that they continued into my lane. Which they both did. My advice this month is, if you see someone changing lanes ahead, don't expect that they will stop at one, and give them plenty of lee way.

## Death Valley Time

This years Death Valley ride meant a lot to me this year. Due to the fact that last year my Brother Phil almost died while we were planning and getting ready for the 2008 DV trip! This year was as eerily similar in that we were doing the same thing one week before we left "Mounting tires" on his KLR650. We didn't make last year, but we were fortunate in many ways due to how the days leading up to last years ride actually probably saved Phil from being a 100 miles from nowhere with no cell service in Death Valley!

This years days leading up to our departure were almost comical! Man we had a plan! We are like three little kids in a candy store just rubbing our eye's with what we are gonna see and do! John White being the cool dude he is (Thanks to Phyllis being his better half) had offered Tony the use of his KLR650. WOW! What an offer! Tony, Phil and I had been waiting for this time on the calendar to get here. Weather PERFECT! All of us on Dual Sports! Tony was gonna tow my trailer with his truck and camper. Talk about plans. We were all excited! Calling each other often and planning it out. Yee Ha!

Then it happened! Somewhere in our little minds we had to adjust (see Tony's article)

No biggee. We just tore his truck apart to install my Trailer Braking system under his dash. Then scrambled a bit to get it back into mine. But the bigger picture was, this is an Adventure and although the circumstances were somewhat out of the norm and hectic in the

final days and the last day, we found that we are not as old as some may think! We were able to adjust to conditions and make the best of what was a Fantastic 4 Day Weekend! Tony rode up on the RT. Phil took his KLR and I brought my XR650R. Yes more changes came our way as you will see when you read Tony's article. As you will see we survived and would adjust to make it an Adventure in Death Valley! Next year? Are you coming?

Doug



## Tony's version.

If it is January, then it's time to ride to Death Valley. This trek makes the sixth consecutive year for the trip. The previous five have all been ride out on Friday, have a day in the Park, and ride home on Sunday. Phil, Doug, and myself were all able to get an extra day this time, actually Phil has two days and Doug says "whatever, I'm retired." The plan is for P&D to trailer their KLR and XR650 dualsports to Death Valley so they can ride the dirt roads. Doug has been after me for many moons to obtain a dualsport, sometime I will, but not now. I'll ride my RT, camp with them, but explore the park on my own. Since I have additional time this year I'll be able to hike the trails and spend much more time taking pictures. Phil was talking with John White, ex-Beatle, at the last meeting about the upcoming trip and how I was riding the RT. John called a few days later and offered me the use of his new KLR. Wow! I don't ride dirt and was reluctant to take the responsibility of such a fine machine. Nonetheless, I accepted his more than gracious offer. Thank-you John. Now I'm driving out with P&D.

We've experienced chilly, rainy weather in Death Valley in previous years. As we are not riding to get there, let's take my truck and the camper. Besides, Doug's truck's brakes are making unusual noises, never a good thing. While not big on floor space, the camper still has the comforts of most RVs; heat, hot & cold running water, bathroom, stove/oven, beer in the fridge. The camper is a load by itself, and Doug's trailer has electric brakes, I need to install a brake controller. Doug has just purchased a controller, but not yet installed it in his truck. My Ford stock controller wiring has been cannibalized to feed other accessories I have added to my vehicle. It takes us a couple of hours to pull the dashboard off and get everything hooked up. We connect the trailer, do a short run to adjust the controller, and are good to go. Unlike Doug's truck, mine has a small back seat, no bueno for an adult, but no problem as someone will ride in the camper. Yes, I know, it's not particularly safe, but you're forgetting, we ride motorcycles.

I call John to arrange my picking up his bike, and call again, and again. Hmmm, several days of leaving messages and no return call. I hope nothing is wrong. Finally, I learn that his plan was to go to Utah with Phyllis and ski for a several days before spending the weekend in Las Vegas, not ski after the weekend, which is what I understood their schedule to be! They are gone. No KLR for me. I'm back on the RT; Doug fixes his brakes and installs the controller in his truck. What a lot of work.

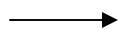
On Thursday afternoon we head out, P&D down the 101 and through Santa Paula, me, I ride through Bakersfield and over Walker pass. It's dark not long out of Bakersfield and I stop in Lake Isabella (the city, not the lake) to

don some warmer gear. The ride on highway 178 over Walker Pass is fairly pleasant and at a decent pace. There is a car in front of me going just the right speed. Its headlights allow me to see further through the turns than I would have riding alone. Highway 395 is effective, enough said. After forty nine miles of 395 I turn at Olancha for Death Valley, only one hundred miles to go and no traffic in sight. I've got an HID high beam that lights up the road eight seconds ahead at sixty five mph; eleven seconds if there is a slight incline. My whole world is that eight second zone, and the sky, oh the sky. No moon, no clouds, no haze, zillions of stars and galaxies. I stop three times just to gaze upward and listen to the silence. This is why I ride. There isn't another vehicle on the road the entire way to Furnace Creek campground. I pull in at 10:15, happy as can be. It is seventy four degrees, no wind, and I've got a good campsite.

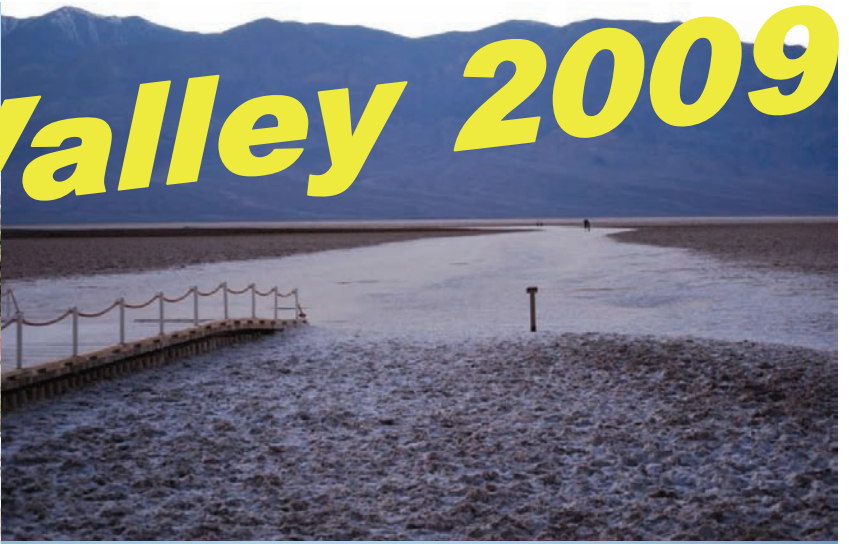
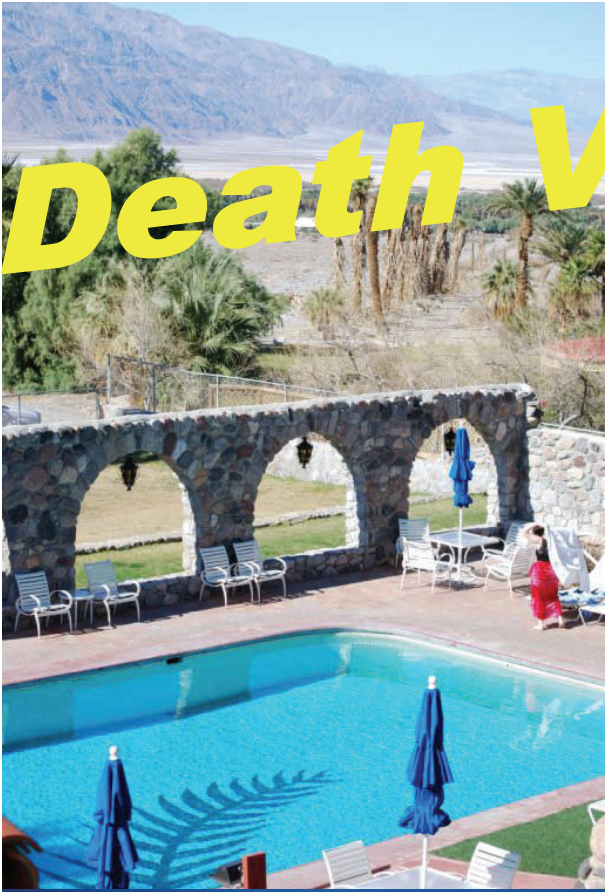
P&D were a little over an hour behind me when I got gas and a sandwich in Pearsonville. They should be here shortly, but I'm tired and crawl into the sleeping bag and go to sleep. Their stealth diesel does pull in sometime around midnight. All is well.

The campsite I set up in was reserved for the weekend so we have to reregister in the morning and move camp a few doors down. We later take Doug's truck to a ranger-led tour of the Furnace Creek Inn. Interesting place built back in the twenties. It would be more appealing in the heat of the summer when you could spend time in the pool and escape indoors when the day warms up. However, so few people visit that time of year it is shut down in the summer. After lunch P&D depart on the dualsports and ride down the Westside Road. I ride out to Salt Creek; the short little creek that runs all year round and supports a unique population of desert pupfish. There is an interpretive boardwalk trail along the water that I walk looking for the fish. Only a few are out in the open water. Zabriskie Point is my next stop. It's late afternoon by now and the shadows make for better picture lighting. My next stop is the Artists' Pallet Drive. By the time I park at the main viewing area, the sun is about half an inch above the mountains. I get a couple of shots with sunlight, the rest are taken in the shade. The last bit of daylight is spent down at Badwater. Side note: Camera vibration reduction hardware is effective; this Badwater photo was handheld at 1/15 of a second at a slight zoom (ISO of 400). Several of the pictures were shot with a polarizing filter to reduce glare. All the shots are as they came from the camera, no PhotoShop.

My ride back to the campground is in the dark. P&D have been at camp for a while. The enchiladas are hot, salad and beer are cold. They even have the campfire going. Thanks guys.



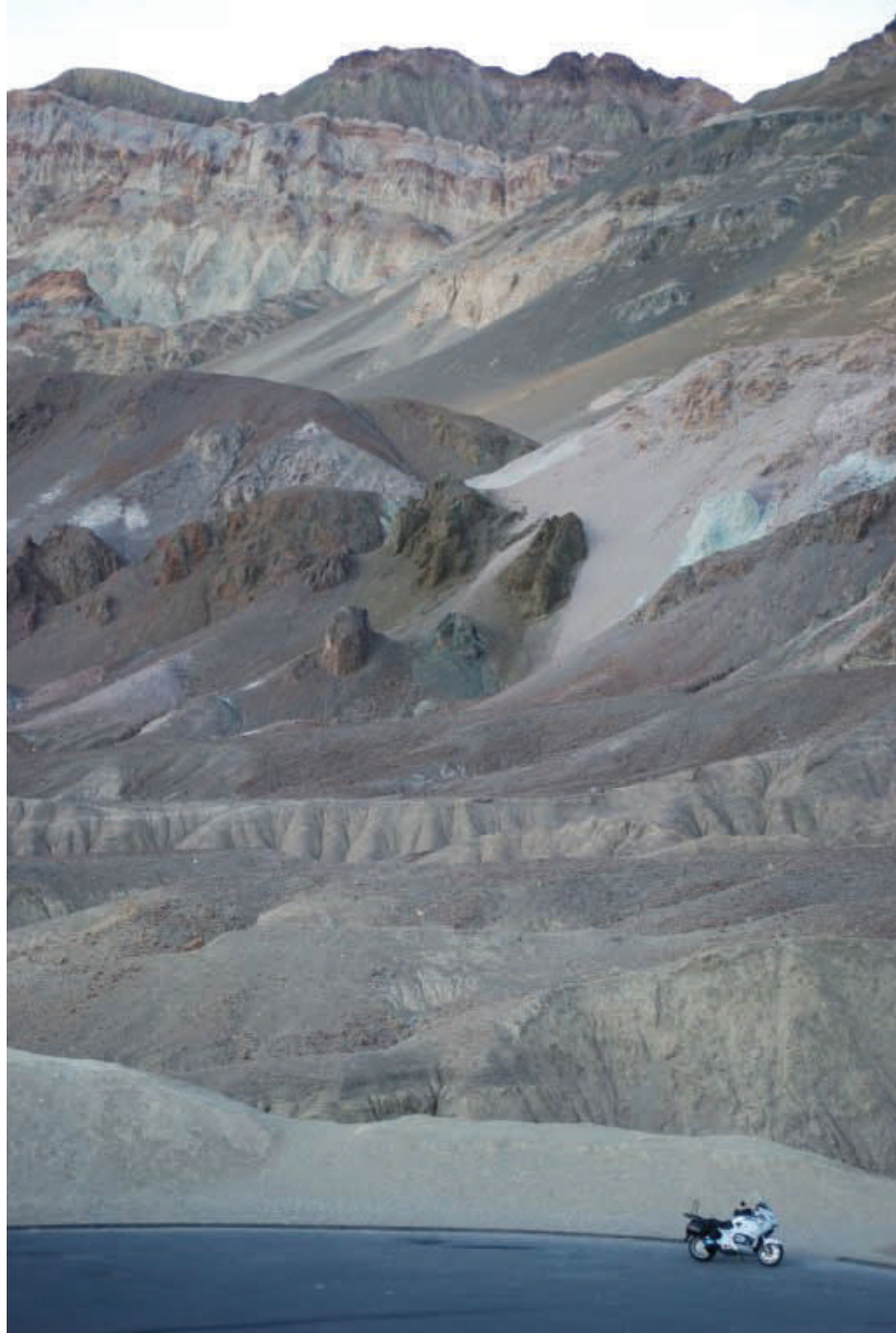
# Death Valley 2009



I'd like to get some pictures from Dante's View when the sun is just coming up so I ride out early Saturday morning. Ah, the desert in the morning, life is good. I turn off the main highway and climb towards the view point. Uh oh, the bike just died, shut off, dead. The battery light is on but no other lights on the dash, the clock never reset, the GPS stayed on. This happened for a few seconds last September, but I could never duplicate the problem at home so I never fixed it. This time, it stays dead. I'm just over fifteen miles from the campground, no cell coverage. I pull the fuses, wriggle wires, still a goner. Well, not much choice but to start coasting. I get back to the main road, run the stop sign, and keep up the relaxing pace, top speed of thirty two mph. The slight inclines drop me down to single digits; reflexive twists of the right wrist do not help. Hopefully I can get as far as the Furnace Creek Inn. Not only do I make it that far, but I've still got speed. I glide past the little shopping area, gas station, and blaze into the visitor's center parking lot at six mph. The last of the momentum gets me into a parking place about two hundred yards from the campsite! I take the riding gear back to camp and return to the visitor's center for a ranger program. The program is held outdoors and part way through the talk a couple of roadrunners scamper into the area. Our ranger goes into a bit of roadrunner fact sharing. They do not eat seeds, but prefer bugs, lizards, snakes, and even other birds. Right on cue one of the roadrunners nails a small bird and races off with it in its

beak. First the long coast and now I get to witness the hunting roadrunner. Is this my lucky day or what? After another hour I head back to camp.

Why are P&D back already? Transmission troubles on Phil's KLR, no first gear, no ride down Titus Canyon. After lunch we take Doug's truck out and participate in a ranger led walk up Golden Canyon. There is a small group of riders from Seattle down for the week camped just across the way from our site. One of them has a KLR and immediately diagnoses Phil's dilemma as a cracked shift lever, a common problem easily fixed with an improved aftermarket lever. This gentleman is a great source of KLR information.



The rest of the day is spent in camp or at the evening program. Barbecued chicken, salad, beer, hardtack (whew), a campfire, yipping coyotes, and the day is over. We pack all the bikes on the trailer in the morning and drive back to Santa Ynez. It was a great trip. The breakdown of two motorcycles probably took thirty minutes out of the trip. This was the first time I've ever ridden where there was a bike trailer. Short of having a problem in my own driveway, there couldn't have been a more convenient location for the mechanical failures. And yes, I'm looking forward to returning in 2010.

Tony S.

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