



# The Stinger

March 2010

## President's Message

It's still too cold for this wuss to ride very much. Just a few short trips on the F650 is all. I'm hoping March will be better. I did manage to get the RT out of the basement, up the slope in the back yard, and into the garage. The bike is back together with freshly greased splines, new tires, new battery, new fluids, new HID low beam headlight, and a brand new "authority" speedometer. ( The old speedo developed the "squeal of death" and then died. ) That's the good news. The bad news is I don't have rear brakes. Oops. What's wrong? The brakes were working fine before I began surgery on the bike. I never went anywhere near the brake system, except in order to pull the transmission, you do have to remove the rear wheel. In order to remove the rear wheel, you have to remove the rear brake caliper. Then you have to jack the rear of the bike up in the air like something obscene. I've checked all the brake hydraulics and electronics, and everything seems to be in order. I even rode the bike around today and I have normal front ABS brakes. My fear is a partial failure of the ABS pump and control unit. Replacing this part comes close to half the value of the bike. I won't know until I take the bike in and have the fault codes from the bike's computer read. Hopefully this will tell me the cause of the problem.

I was having a hard time coming up with a quote for this month. My travails with my RT made me think of this quote: *"The stone age didn't end because they ran out of stones. It ended because they found something better."* **-Ahmed Yamani**

When I turned 16, I begged my father for a car. Finally he relented, but to my surprise, he towed home two wrecked 1956 Fords, neither of which would run. His plan was to teach me auto mechanics by having me combine the best parts of the two cars into one. He knew what he was doing. I learned a lot working on my car. I loved endlessly tuning the engine. Setting the points. Checking the timing. Rebuilding and tweaking the carburetor. I rebuilt the engine and transmission, and replaced the clutch, brakes, shocks and wheel bearings. There wasn't much I couldn't do on my 1956 Ford coupe which took me off to college. It ran like a top and I must say it was pretty sharp looking after being repainted and getting new upholstery. Later it was replaced by a 1966 Mustang which I could still do plenty of work on. Eventually the 'Tang gave way to newer cars and that was pretty much the end of my car mechanic career. Points disappeared in favor of electronic ignition. Fuel injection replaced the carburetor. A computer module was required to make all these systems talk to each other over something similar to the CAN-bus. Now about all I can do on my cars is change the oil and filter. Woopee. How satisfying is that?

One of the attractions of motorcycles for me was being able to wrench on my bikes since I no longer could on my cars. Sadly, I see motorcycles going the way of automobiles. Without a computer attached to a GS911 or OBD-II reader, I had done all I could with my brake failure.

March Breakfast Golden Corral

665 East 7200 South Midvale - Mar 13 - 9:30 am

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A mechanic told me that this was progress, and one just had to have the proper tools. He compared having a diagnostic computer to having a ratchet and socket set, a voltmeter, or a torque wrench. I disagree. All of those tools can be used on cars and other things besides a motorcycle. However, a shade tree mechanic can't afford an expensive diagnostic computer that just works on motorcycles, and just one brand of motorcycles at that. Now the CAN-bus has come along on all of the BMW bikes since 2005 to make matters worse. That's one reason I haven't been enthusiastic about getting a new steed. Still, increased sophistication and complexity are required to meet newer emission standards, better fuel economy, and more power which benefits us all. Oh, well. I'll still be able to change the oil and filter. Hopefully.

Our next meeting will be at 9:30 on March 13<sup>th</sup> at the Golden Corral at 665 Fort Union Boulevard (7200 S.) in Midvale. Afterwards there will be a tech session at Motorcycle Repair and Rendezvous on valve adjustments. Learn it while you can because it's unlikely you'll be able to adjust your valves starting with the 2010 model boxers with their new overhead cams which use a bucket and shim adjustment. Progress?

Ride safely,

*Al Wagnon*

**Addendum:** Late breaking news: I got the rear brakes on my RT to work. Didn't even need a computer. Even though I had tested the rear brake light switch a gazillion times, I was able to get the rear brake to work by bypassing the switch. Problem isolated. I love my stone age RT.

### BULLETIN

To all my friends and fellow riders, Rendezvous will close the end of February 2010. The rest of the business is still there, meaning the sale of tires, batteries, parts, apparel, and accessories.

The service and repair side of Motorcycle Repair & Ron, who ran the service shop, gave me his notice that he is leaving and intends to open his own service and repair shop. His decision to leave was a complete surprise and I do wish him well. Ron will have his new shop open in the next few weeks.

Yes, we will continue the Saturday Seminars through the end of March so please come in for these fun and informative sessions. The schedule on our web site will be followed.

Because of the financial drain in the winter when the service shop makes little or no money, and with the loss of the future revenue from service and repair when the riding season starts, I need to raise funds. With that said, the shop will be offering great discounts on everything in the store. We are way over-stocked. I need the money, not the merchandise.

Please come into Motorcycle R&R, bring your credit card or check or cash, and let's make some great deals.

Jeff Thurmond  
Motorcycle Repair & Rendezvous  
7021 S Commerce Park Drive  
Midvale, UT 84047  
801-255-1444

## Vice President's Message

I am often reminded of the quote "The only thing that remains constant is change". Last week we received the news that Motorcycle Repair and Rendezvous (MR&R) was closing its doors. For the past 6 years they have been a cornerstone of our riding community. I do not know how many of you are familiar with the 1980's sitcom *Cheers*. The tagline from the show's theme song was: "Where everyone knows your name and their always glad you came". For me, that is what MR&R represented.

In following the Cheers theme, I am not sure which character I am most like Norm or Cliff; it probably depended on the day. MR&R was the place where we all gathered to tell our tall tales of adventures past & future. Jeff Thurmond was (is) the master organizer and owner. Many of us planned our riding around MR&R events. The riding season began with the Durango trip and the Saturday night dinner rides and ended with the Last ride down to Torrey and the fall awards dinner. It was often difficult to know the difference between Beehive Beemer (BHB) club events and MR&R events. There have been several BHB board discussions about our club's calendar and whether or not it was really a MR&R calendar, many of the events and pictures from the calendar were actually MR&R organized events.

In the winter when it was difficult to ride, MR&R remained the place where we would congregate. It was the garage where if we couldn't ride we could still talk about riding. Ron Schmidt held the tech seminars, where he made every mechanical mystery look easy. I came just to remind myself to leave the mechanical work to the experts. On more than 1 occasion I brought my bike in on a trailer after finding I had started a project that was over my head. And, when we had enough of hearing ourselves talk, the shop hosted movie nights where we could watch the motorcycle adventures most of us could only dream about.

Things change and people move on to new things. Ron, Jason Haynes & Jeff Hibner will be opening a new shop downtown. Jeff (Thurmond) & Ron started MR&R because of their love for biking and with a commitment to our BMW riding community. While I am sure there will be other places and events that fill the void left by MR&R, it is important to recognize the impact it has had on so many of us. Many of the friendships I have today started because of MR&R.

It will be a real loss when the last of us knocks on MR&R's door only to hear the last line from Cheers: "Sorry we're closed". Before that happens, I hope you have a chance to drop by the shop and say goodbye. Jeff is keeping the doors open through March until he has a chance to sell the last of his inventory. There are some great bargains and your purchases will help with the costs associated with the closing of the shop.

Motorcycle Repair & Rendezvous lived up to its name and will truly be missed.

*Dave*

# The Changing of a Dream

Jeff Thurmond

Like many of you, I started riding motorcycles a long time ago. There were not that many riders in Utah in the 1960's and early 1970's and motorcycle shops were neat places to visit. Back then when you went to get a new chain installed, valves adjusted, a new tire, or wanted to talk about some accessory for your ride, you talked to the mechanic who was doing the work or some friendly enthusiast who knew all about the accessories that would fit on your bike. When I moved to Chicago in 1974, the local Honda store for my CB750 would not allow me into the service shop. No one would talk to me about the benefits of one chain or sprocket set compared to another. No one knew about different handle bars and no one would take the time to do research on them. When I relocated to the Washington DC area in late 1978, I realized my CB750 was too big for daily commuting and I got a CB400F. The Honda store, again, would not allow me to talk to the mechanics, and no one knew anything about what roads in the Virginia or Maryland country side were good for rides. I tried other cycle shops and the same attitude and lack of advice and absence of friendly atmosphere prevailed. When I came back to Utah in 1999 I was too busy at a new job to spend time on my motorcycle and it wasn't until 2002 that I came to know the bike shops around here. Sterile. Some glitz in the show room but if you were not ready to buy a new ride, or if you wanted to talk to a mechanic instead of service advisor, you were basically ignored. And if you wanted to know about great roads to ride, or places for day trips, you were on your own.

When I decided to open a motorcycle store in 2004, I wanted it to be different. I knew retail operations from a customer view, and my skill at wrenching was limited to changing sprockets and chains, adjusting the rear drum brake, and changing oil. Ron Schmidt was the service manager at BMW of Salt Lake and he had just resigned from that position. In talking with Ron, I learned that he was not going to leave Utah as he loved it here, he was not about to work in a Honda or Harley store, and he simply did not know what he was going to do. I suggested that we open a unique motorcycle shop. I would put up all the money and run the business side of the store and he would do the mechanical side. I figured that it was a good safe venture as Ron is the best mechanic I had ever met and BMW riders know the importance of maintenance.

Part of the dream for the store was to allow customers to walk anyplace in the shop, talk to the people who were working on their bikes, and have someone (me) be able to answer questions about accessories, riding gear, and where to go for day trips or longer rides. I got busy reading everything I could find on accessories and riding gear. I spend hours taking roads I had never traveled. We soon initiated the dinner rides on Saturday afternoon when the store closed for the day. Because I like various destination rides, I turned that into the Annual Autumn Ride Contest with places to visit, visual scavenger hunts, and other fun things to do on your motorcycle. The first weekend ride was hosted that September when we rode to Springdale at the entrance to Zion's Park and were left speechless when we had 45 people show up for dinner the first night of the weekend. Because it snows in Utah, to keep the enthusiasm of riding alive during the cold months, Saturday Seminars were started the first year the store was open. We always had a pot of coffee going, cold soda in the refrigerator, and donuts and cookies on a kitchen table.

We took the time to talk to people and the name of the store said it all - Motorcycle Repair & Rendezvous -- a motorcycle shop where you get service and repairs and a place to gather, talk, share stories, and just hang out. Sort of like the old TV show Cheers, a great local bar where everyone knows your name.

In the ensuing years the shop developed a reputation for excellent mechanical work, good service, friendly customer care, and a ride destination in itself. The Saturday Seminars filled the little space we had, dozens of folks followed along and met for dinner on Saturday evenings, the Autumn Ride Contest was continued and two annual companion events were added, the Spring & Summer Contest and the Annual Mileage tracking. Ron could fix anything, do custom work that no one else would even try, and knows BMW motorcycle maintenance better than anyone.

I was proud of how different our little R&R store was. I was happy to see it grow in the number of new customers each year and the number of folks who kept coming back. I was amazed at how deft and capable Ron was with anything mechanical. And I was glad that riders often just came in to say hello and get advice on everything from windshields to foot pegs to canyon roads.

Like the climate in Utah, the motorcycle shop business is seasonal. All shops are really slow business wise with little or no revenue from around November until mid-March. All shops go in debt during these months to pay wages and other overhead costs. This debt load is then paid back by late May or early June and all is good until November comes again. You get used to it. Additionally motorcycle shops and what they offer in service and apparel and accessories, are in the discretionary spending area. No one needs a motorcycle. You may need food, a car, a house or apartment, and when the economy gets tight, the things that are discretionary come after the necessities. Every motorcycle store in Utah knows this, and every motorcycle store prays for an early spring and a healthy riding season.

As most readers of this article know by now, Ron told me in February that he was leaving R&R to open his own shop. He also was taking our other two mechanics with him. There is already a BMW dealership in the north end of the valley, BMW of Salt Lake at 215 N Redwood Road (801-936-4600). There is a great new BMW dealership in the heart of the valley, BMW of Utah at 339 W 90<sup>th</sup> S (SW corner of 90<sup>th</sup> and I-15, 801-618-2700). Ron's shop will be at 427 N 300 W (801-359-1269). With three places to take your BMW for service and repairs, and with no mechanics to do the work in my store, it was clear that I could not keep the doors open for long. The service and related parts portion of R&R accounted for about 85% of the revenue and I could not survive selling helmets, windshields, bungee nets, and riding jackets.

For a new motorcycle store to open, spring is the ideal time. For a store to be faced with having no revenue from service work to cover the winter expenses, spring is not a good time. That is why I am selling everything at a discounted price with the knowledge that the doors will close for good on R&R in the next few months.

It is not easy to see your dream coming to an end. But like a lot of dreams, I intend to keep some of it going. First, I will continue to be the Planner for the Beehive Beemer's Red Rock Rendezvous. Next, I have been asked by many riders "where will I ride this year"? I am amazed how ingrained our dinner rides, weekend rides, and ride events have become in the riding community.

The Beehive Beemers and R&R have a calendar that lists the Beehive Beemer and R&R events for the year. The R&R website, [www.MotorcycleRandR.com](http://www.MotorcycleRandR.com), also lists these events.

Yes, the dinner rides will continue. Yes, the weekend rides will continue. And yes, the ride contests will also continue.

The really great news is that the rides will be started close to where R&R is now, at the BMW Motorcycles of Utah dealership at 90<sup>th</sup> S and I-15. And the Annual Contests will continue through BMW Motorcycles of Utah. I needed a venue to stage the riding events and BMW of Utah is perfect for this.

The continuation of these riding events is a gigantic leap of faith on my part. I deeply hope that riders will support my effort at keeping these events going. At the same time, I love doing the dinner rides, and the weekend rides are always real highlights in the riding season for me. The annual contests are the best part of my riding dream, because they reflect many of the places I rode the prior year and prior months and give my creativity a chance to come out in the other ways to have riders get contest points.

I have given a lot of blood, sweat and tears in these past 6 years to give the riding community a special, unique and excellent place to get service and just hang out. I encourage you to keep some of this alive by joining me on the dinner rides and weekend rides. I urge you to sign up for the ride contests as they are a lot of fun. The Annual Autumn Ride Contest will be available at both R&R and BMW of Utah the last week of March. The ride routes for the dinner rides and weekend rides will be on the R&R website and probably on the BMW of Utah website.

As Jimmy Buffet sang, some moments were magic, some moments were tragic, but it was a great ride all the same. Let's keep the rides going.

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## Utah Rider

By Bob Mabey

The Airhead's 2010 Death Valley rally was mostly a positive experience. Thane, Quinn and I headed out Thursday afternoon with the weather cool, but mostly clear, except for a bit of a snow squall passing through Nephi for Delta where we accessed the "Beckstrand High Speed/Better Weather Bypass" (otherwise known as Utah 257/130 from Delta through Milford to Cedar City. We arrived in Mesquite before dark, enjoying the warmer temperatures that came with the descent out of Cedar and in to Saint George where we ran in to Rich Dolan enroute from Park City. Rich was shivering almost too much to pump gas in to his GS. With the Oasis still closed, our rooms of choice were at the Casablanca.

It really hits home that times are tough when you ask what time the buffet opens and they tell you that there is no buffet at the Casablanca due to the economy! We unloaded the bikes and rode back north to the Virgin River, not previously my favorite buffet, but now the only



choice. They seemed to be doing pretty well with a full parking lot, live music, and a decent buffet.

The next morning we headed out for Death Valley via the scenic route through Overton and along the shores of Lake Meade to Henderson, previously one of my favorite routes around Las Vegas. Just after exiting the freeway we passed a group of Harley folks who were coming on to the highway from a rest stop. As the group accelerated, one rider decided to stop and let Quinn go by. Unfortunately, his buddy behind him must have been looking over his shoulder at the highway and plowed full tilt in to him, the result being two smashed up Harley's. We didn't stop, but Quinn did catch the first part of the group and tell them what had happened. Another case for not riding close together in large groups.

The Great Sonzini recommended "Sugar's" for breakfast in Overton and it was good and affordable - and also the only café still in business in the town. We headed out after breakfast feeling good, but slowed down often by periodic construction and flag persons along the Lake Meade Parkway. This finally came to an end and our speed picked up accordingly along the twisty scenic byway. At this point the Lake Meade route dropped off my list of favorite routes.

The Federal law enforcement officer was pulled over and ready to make a u-turn after my two amigos when I came by. There was a brief moment or two when I thought that he might pass me and go after the big fish, but he decided to go with the "bird in hand" theory and turned on his lights. We had a very formal and one sided conversation and I ended up with a \$425 speeding ticket for doing seventy in a fifty mile an hour zone. Well, in truth the ticket was only \$400. \$25 was for shipping and handling. This took the fun out of the ride for awhile.

At Death Valley the Airheads group was put in the upper end of the Texas Springs campground on the side of the hill due to the lower campground being, typically, flooded out. It was much better than the almost always dealing with muddy spots in the lower campground. We ended up with a number of familiar faces (Rich, John, Roy,

Troy the Welder), but I was disappointed to see that the Northern Utah contingent didn't make it, nor did the Friese's. Kodak Al, my old flying buddy and companion on two Alaska trips, was there from Issaquah on his new GS purchased after being run down by a septic tank truck last fall. He had pictures of the accident.

Al is really lucky to be alive and it was nice to spend some time catching up with him. He's outfitted the new GS with "P3" brake lights which impressed me enough to do the same.

The Airheads had a Saturday dinner/Sunday breakfast deal that worked out great - nothing spectacular, but handy and tasty. On Sunday I headed home to try to get back in to my wife's good graces since she had fallen on some ice taking the garbage out and broken her leg.

I guess that spring is about here since there were two Salt Lake motorcycle officers working the 6<sup>th</sup> South off ramp yesterday with their nice new Beemers. Business looked good, but for some reason it's still hard for me to feel real great about motorcycles being used for this purpose. Spring, along with the ebb and flow of the economy, also brings the closure of Motorcycle R&R. Jeff brought a lot of energy and a lot of good things to the area Beemer community and our club. The up side is that he will still very much be around, but we'll all miss R&R. Ron's new shop just north of West High on 3<sup>rd</sup> West should be up and running in a few weeks and we wish him well. Let's ride!

# Member Profile

By Bob Mabey

Most of us have a drawer full of this guy's T-shirts. He's been designing our rally pins and shirts since the beginning and is now finishing up the designs for year number ten. If you also have a drawer full of his Jockey shorts I don't think we want to know the details, at least for inclusion in this article.

Dave Barber is a Utah boy, born and raised in Ogden, but experiencing most of those typical youthful motorcycle misadventures while visiting his cousins in Idaho. There he had access to a mixed bag of Hodaka's, Maico's and other exotic machinery not readily available (or tolerated) at home. Of course, as we all can imagine, he was always closely watched and properly trained in the art of operating these machines by his cousins!

Dave's first real experience with a machine of his own came in 1990 with the purchase of a R60 which was followed by a R80RT that he managed to put a fair amount of miles on. His current rides are a sweet R100RS (converted by Dave from an RT), a R1100RS and a Kawasaki KLR 650. Dave says the Airhead is pretty much his favorite ride.

Somewhere along the line Dave ended up in Logan, was encouraged to get involved with paint brushes and signs, and ended up establishing Superior Sign in 1989. In addition to our rally shirts, Dave has been the go to guy for banners too. Dave always comes across as a particularly mellow guy, especially as the evening progresses in the Beer Garden. He's another one of those club members who make our Beehive Beemer group interesting and fun.

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## The Faster You Go

### The Less You Weigh!

**By: James R. Davis**

If you were to measure how much your motorcycle (and you) weigh at a dead stop and then while you are moving at, say, 80+ MPH, there would be a meaningful difference.

This happens because the faster you travel through the air, the stronger the turbulence and, thus, the lift that the relatively low pressure of turbulence creates. Turbulence below the bike is trivial by comparison to that above it.

And, if instead of sitting straight up you are leaned forward, your back creates an airfoil that creates even greater lift.

If the combined weight of you and the bike, when at a dead stop, is about 800 pounds, then when you are moving at speeds of 80+ MPH that combined weight will be closer to 760 pounds, or less. And the faster you go, the lower that total will be. For comparison purposes, a 1970 Chevelle weighed in at 3820 pounds standing still and was found to weigh 321 pounds less (8%) at 100 MPH. Your bike will probably not lose more than 6% of its weight at that speed (or at, for example, 80 MPH with a 20 MPH headwind) because it does not have quite the horizontal profile of an automobile.

You might think the lift would be evenly distributed fore and aft. Wrong. Far more of the lift is on the front wheel than the rear. And why that's important is that with a lowering of weight on the front end there is a corresponding reduction in traction and, thus, stabilizing force available from trail. Indeed, at very high speeds your motorcycle will feel unresponsive and 'light' in the front end - so much so that you will not trust it (nor should you) to hold onto the ground in your turns.

While there is always a net lift caused by airflow with speed, the effect on the rear end of your bike could well be to increase its weight. This, because just like the amount of weight transfer acceleration generates is determined by how high the center of gravity is as compared to the wheelbase, wind resistance creates a downforce in the rear proportional to how high the center of wind resistance is to that wheelbase.

[All wind resistance is above the ground while all forward motion forces are at ground level. That automatically creates a torque which tries to lift the front and lower the rear.]

Downforce on the rear wheel can be less than, equal to, or greater than the lift generated by turbulence as described above and that is largely determined by how high the center of wind resistance point is relative to the wheelbase.

The taller you sit, the more 'baggy' your clothing, the 'wider' you are, the bigger your windscreen, and the faster you move ... the lighter your front end will get, but the more likely the bike's rear end will get heavier rather than lighter.

Lest you think this is academic... the reason there are short (seemingly useless) windscreens on sportbikes is to diminish the turbulence BEHIND the rider so that there is not so much lift of the bike at speed that control is badly compromised. They are small so that they do not, at the same time, increase downforce from wind resistance that would lighten the front end even more. Tourers take note: your windscreen lightens your front end dramatically!

Given enough horsepower and proper gearing your maximum possible speed becomes limited to that which results in insufficient front wheel traction to steer the motorcycle.

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