

The 15,000 mile itch

It's become somewhat traditional for me to throw movie quotes into these ruminations, and in pondering this column, I see no reason to stray from the pattern. Because I am who I am, though, when I started thinking about the subject of this month's "Between the Gutters", I immediately thought of the 1955 film *The Seven-Year Itch*, which stars the inestimable Marilyn Monroe as, simply, "The Girl." Her mere presence is enough to tempt a total milquetoast of a man into flights of carnal fancy. At one point in the film, she says,

"When it gets hot like this, you know what I do? I keep my undies in the icebox!"

As motorcycle riders, I think we've all had days when we'd have liked to have frozen underpants. Anybody that went to the MOA Rally in Bloomsburg, PA will have wished that wish at least once. That quote doesn't really fit my thought process this time around, though, so I had to come up with something else.

You may know I'm somewhat of a sci-fi nerd—anything with ray guns, space ships or robots, well, I'm just all over that. My next thought went to the 1967 season two premiere episode of the original *Star Trek* TV series, "Amok Time." In this episode, Spock is suffering from a condition called *pon farr*, which forces a

Vulcan male to basically go into heat once every seven years; if he doesn't mate, he'll die. Naturally, Captain Kirk disobeys orders and does everything he can to save his friend's life.

While I'm not going to try to equate riding a motorcycle to an irresistible—and possibly fatal—urge to have sex, Spock says something in this episode that has always stuck with me; he says,

"After a time, you may find that having is not so pleasing a thing after all as wanting."

He's talking about a woman, but this, I attest, can be applied to the world of motorcycles in a very concrete way.

In June 2006, I bought a 1997 R 850 R from a man in Pennsylvania. After riding it for about 15,000 miles, I sold it in January 2008 to a woman in Ohio. In November 2007—almost exactly six years ago to the day I'm writing this—I purchased a 1995 R 1100 GS. I sold it in December 2010 after putting about 15,000 miles on it.

I didn't know the mileages on either of these bikes when I sold them until I looked them up in my maintenance records. Needless to say, it came as somewhat

of a shock. Suddenly, the restless feelings I've been having about my 2005 R 1200 GS started making sense. I bought it in January 2011 and—this will probably come as no surprise—since then, I've put just about 15,000 miles on it (actually, exactly 30 miles less than I put on that little green R 850 R as of this writing).

It's not that I'm not happy with my GS. It's not that I have another bike in my sights that I can't live without. I like my GS as much as I've liked any bike I owned in the past, even the Suzuki Bandit that—surprise—I put about 15,000 miles on before I wrecked it.

There's something in me, then that simply gets restless after about 15,000 miles with a bike and causes me to start looknig around for another one. I don't have the money nor the desire to buy another bike right now, but I've caught myself more than once looking at the IBMWR Marketplace and the want-ads in the back of the BMW MOA *Owner's News*.

I can't quite put my finger on exactly what it is, but maybe it has something to do with a level of comfort and complacency that develops in about 15,000 miles. By then, I've grown accustomed to the performance and idiosyncrasies of a bike. I've fixed most of the things that could go wrong with a bike in that stage of its life. I've altered, adjusted, upgraded, replaced

From the Editor: Thanks to all 2013 contributors

I would like to thank everybody who contributed material to the magazine throughout the course of 2013: As the editor, I simply couldn't do what I do without the contributions of the club's members!

Articles, updates, info and other written material: Karen Ager, Chris Barritt, Marty Cover, Hanna Creekmore, Fire & Iron MC Station 161, Jim Ford, Suzanne Glover, Angelo Gravagna, Bob Higdon, Corey Hinderstein, Ed Pfister, Ed Phelps, Bill Shaw, Gerard Williams and Steve Willis.

Articles and photos: Phil Ager, Drew Alexander, Steve Anderson, BMW Motorrad, Cheree Craze, Tina Fraembs, Chase Hinderstein, Jim Hopkins, Scott Keimig, Judy Macaluso, George Mangicaro, Michael Potter, Mark Potvin, Wendy Schuss, Maria Vandergucht and Henry Winokur.

Photos or illustrations: Matt Brown, Yvonne Dooley, Jody Douglas, France-Lee Griggs, Killboy, Taylor Larimore, the family of Paul Mihalka, Simon Meyer, John Meza, Steven Radcliffe, Charlie Roberts, Roy Temple and Andrew Zorn.

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Editorial help, guidance and patience: Leigh Duffy and Elsie Smith.

Remember our motto: no picture is too big, no story is too small! Tell us about your trip, idea, event, product, repair, restoration or whatever it is you're interested in writing about. *BtS* survives on your contributions!

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From the (New) President

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or removed all the things that irritated me with it along the way. In other words, I've turned it into my perfect bike. It's no longer a project, a fixer-upper; it's become a known entity and that, I think, takes some of the edge off the relationship.

What I'm looking for, then, isn't the perfect bike. I'm looking for an exciting bike, a bike that gets my adrenaline pumping again. Luckily, I'm broke right now, so the GS is staying right where it is. Instead of replacing the bike, I'm trying to spice up the relationship in other ways. I just bought some new leather apparel, so I guess we'll see how it goes.

I could be in trouble, though, with my sidecar rig in another 5,000 miles. Let's hope I can weather the storm when that time comes.



excellence for a president as set by Maria Vandergucht these past years. One of the first items coming up is our not-to-be-missed Holiday Party on Saturday January 11 at the Golden Bull Restaurant in Gaithersburg, MD. Registration guidance is found in this issue of *BtS* and on the club web page. A bit more imminent is the last club meeting and the last tech day of 2013, which both occur on Sunday December 8 at Battley Cycles. Our 40th year as a sanctioned club starts in January! Stick around—it should be a fun ride.



Oktoberfest season has ended, with Battley's event rescheduled to 26 October due to inclement weather on the original date. It was a chilly day, punctuated by a stiff breeze, but that didn't stop the grillmeister from churning out tasty bratwurst, sauerkraut and pretzels. Some folks went in for the cold soda, but the smart bet all day was the hot apple cider. The day also featured some solid German atmosphere; even the Harleys in attendance couldn't drown out the oom-pa band. Everybody seemed to focus their attention on Jim Hopkins' 1964 R60/2 Polezei, though. Smile by Cristina Richardson, photo by Jim Hopkins.

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