**Gravely Ride Update**

Just a short note to catch you all up on this event scheduled for July 19-21 (see January Newsletter, page 28)… Although it is still early, we have about a dozen riders formally expressing interest so far and several others who have verbally indicated interest to me that just haven’t gotten around to filling out the signup form yet. I recently spoke with Jay and Mike and planning this event is rattling around in their heads. Mike is planning to take one of his planes up soon and check out the camping area (I think any excuse to fly) and Jay is talking about this big camp wok thingy he has that he says he can use to cook up some awesome fajitas. They are both looking forward to sharing this area with you all. I want to be clear that this is Jay’s and Mike’s ride, although when I told them that Dick would like a little reminder for the Newsletter they told me to write it. I guess that just makes me the designated ride carny barker.

I would just remind folks that this area offers up a diverse mix of roads from single track to Winnebago surfaces so riders of all abilities should be able to find enjoyable routes. Probably not for sport bikes, RT’s’s or CanAm’s, but any GS/dirt type bike or hack (or 4-wheeler, Richard) should find routes they are comfortable with or with just enough challenge to make it fun. I suspect riders will break up into informal smaller groups of like abilities and objectives (ride slow-ride fast, ride easy-ride rough) and spread out on different routes for the days’ rides. So don’t be shy about coming…we are an accommodating friendly group.

Much planning remains to be done. There are a number of items to be resolved with participants i.e.: Would you use GPS tracks if we went to the trouble to make them? What are your preferences for meals… fend for yourself or have a group cookout all can contribute to? Fuel availability? And several other topics to discuss are on my mind anyway. I plan to bring an extra bike to loan to someone if theirs breaks down so they don’t lose the weekend. I forget the members name (sorry, it is a longevity thing), but a couple years ago on the Little Belt Ride a member’s bike wouldn’t start in the morning and he had to load up and head home missing out on the ride.

Officers and staff have recently been discussing ways to facilitate members contacting one another for the purposes of planning rides. One of the concerns with a club that has members scattered across a large area is that we tend to become a bit insular and primarily ride with our same local members and members don’t really have a good mechanism to coordinate rides; especially outside of their immediate area. We are working on that; but rides like this, Phil’s ‘Little Belt Ride’, Ken’s ‘To Helena-and-Back Ride’, Huddy’s Tech Day, and our lunches are great events to meet members and find those compatible riding partners with whom you may plan future rides. Although we don’t get to visit much inside our helmets during the day, sitting around a campfire in the evening is a great and fun way to get to know one another.

Ok, this isn’t as short a missive as I envisioned but I do want to address one other item. In looking at the participation list to date, I see some new members, or at least names I am not familiar with have signed up. This is great and I look forward to meeting you. I just want to be clear to all participants that the MTBMWRiders Club, officers and staff, and ride organizers can accept no liability for this or any other event organized by the club or members. We are a small nonprofit organization of like mind (well, bikes anyway) with ridiculously cheap dues and no liability insurance. Being a motorcyclist you have likely consciously accepted the inherent risks associated with riding whenever you throw a leg over a bike. As you must be aware the rewards can be enormous. Members participating in these events are expected to accept responsibility for their actions, and any damage to self or bike will remain between you and your insurance company. We are an ATGATT club, which is one of the reason I was attracted to the club (well that, and owning a really nice little airhead). Although I may have observed the minor transgression of someone not wearing armored pants on a really hot day I have yet to see anyone ride up with just a hanky protecting their head. Sometimes peer pressure is a good thing. Please be aware of your limits and do all that you can to ride safe on these rides. No shame in turning around when you are not comfortable, I do it all the time.

So that we don’t bother those members not participating, we will create a contact list of just those participating so that we can solicit input on the above and any other planning points participants think of. If this ride is at all of interest to you, do go to our website soon, navigate to the Events page, and then the sign up form and submit it so we can include you in planning this event. If you don’t have a computer or can’t get to the form just call me and we’ll figure something out and get you included. Even if you aren’t quite sure you can make the date send it in so we can get your input into the planning.

Come join us, LL