



In this Issue. . . .

- ❖ Wichahoney Camp & the Bruneau Hot Springs Area (Andrew Mentzer)
- ❖ The Voyage – Part 1: My Three Months South of the Border on Two Wheels (Samuel Stone)
- ❖ The Start of a New Riding Season (Craig O. Olsen)

Wickahoney Camp & the Bruneau Hot Springs Area

By Andrew Mentzer

(Originally published in the Boise Weekly on May 9, 2011, and reproduced here by permission of the author.)

When exploring the remote areas of southwest Idaho's Owyhee County, you cannot be too prepared. Much of the county is prone to erratic weather, unforgiving conditions and poor signage. It's very easy to get lost and can be very difficult to get out if something goes wrong.

Most of Owyhee County is high mountain desert, with rolling hills and plentiful sagebrush. Saddled in the southwest corner of the state, Owyhee County is bordered to the north by the Snake River and to the south by the Owyhee Mountains and Nevada state line. In between are a number of fun and scenic routes to explore.



Recently, I jumped on my dual sport motorcycle, commissioned the company of my older brother Jay and my friend Rustin, and set out for Owyhee County. Our goal was to reach the Wichahoney Stage Stop [1] and the hot springs region south of Bruneau.



Getting There: Leaving Boise around 3 p.m., we headed out Pleasant Valley Road south of Gowen Field. Pleasant Valley turns to dirt a few miles from town and parallels Interstate 84 eastbound all the way to the Union Pacific Rail line. A quick traverse over to Simco Road and we were back on hardtop.

Rustin got a flat about five miles out Simco Road. After a side-of-the-road tube replacement, we were back at full strength. A quick dogleg from Simco to Highway 67 to Strike Dam Road and we were treated to some amazing plateau views adjacent to CJ Strike Reservoir.



Following dinner at the Black Sands Resort and a fuel stop in Grand View, we headed south on legendary Mud Flat Road—a primary access point to some of the best recreation spots in Owyhee County. About nine miles out on Mud Flat Road, we elected to explore the Shoofly Cutoff Road, which took us back east through rolling agricultural fields. It's quite odd riding on a gravel road with sagebrush to your right and lush green fields to your left, but the unique soil compositions in this area are just that: unique.

The Shoofly Cutoff Road crosses Highway 51 south of Bruneau and turns into No Name Road. No Name Road turns into what looked like an old wagon trail, before disappearing into a field. This field turned into a sandy full-throttle hill climb. A little lost, we made a beeline for higher ground to see if we could spot a trail or road. After a bit of bushwhacking, we found our way back down to No Name Road, which led us to what appeared to be a favorite make-out spot for local high school kids—hundreds of names and dates were carved into the windblown desert sandstone. Burning daylight, we pushed on.



After a lot of guesswork in the dark, we eventually found our way to CCC Road and the Bruneau River hot springs area. Hot Springs Road would have taken us south to the Idaho Centennial Trail [2], but we had other plans for this short trip. We camped at the Indian Bathtub Hot Springs [3], and located the pools the next morning.





After a brisk night's sleep, a breakfast of cold hotdogs and quick bike check, we were on our way south again. CCC Road meanders through some excellent scenery for about 22 miles before crossing back over Highway 51 toward Wickahoney Crossing. There are cattle aplenty, so mind your pace around corners.

The Wickahoney area is an absolute head-trip. There are actually two distinct places to visit here, roughly five miles apart: Wickahoney Stage Stop and Wickahoney Crossing. The Crossing—an ancient, but still apparently functioning cattle corral—is just six miles off of Highway 51. The Stage Stop—a crumbling refuge from the days of the Old West—is considerably more difficult to reach. With a good map or GPS in hand, you can take an unmarked road approximately one mile west of the Crossing that quickly turns to extremely rough two track. You can only reach Wickahoney Stage Stop by foot, motorcycle, ATV or 4x4 vehicle with good ground clearance, as anything else would probably have trouble making it through several seasonal creeks, deep whoops and a handful of narrow barbed-wire gates.



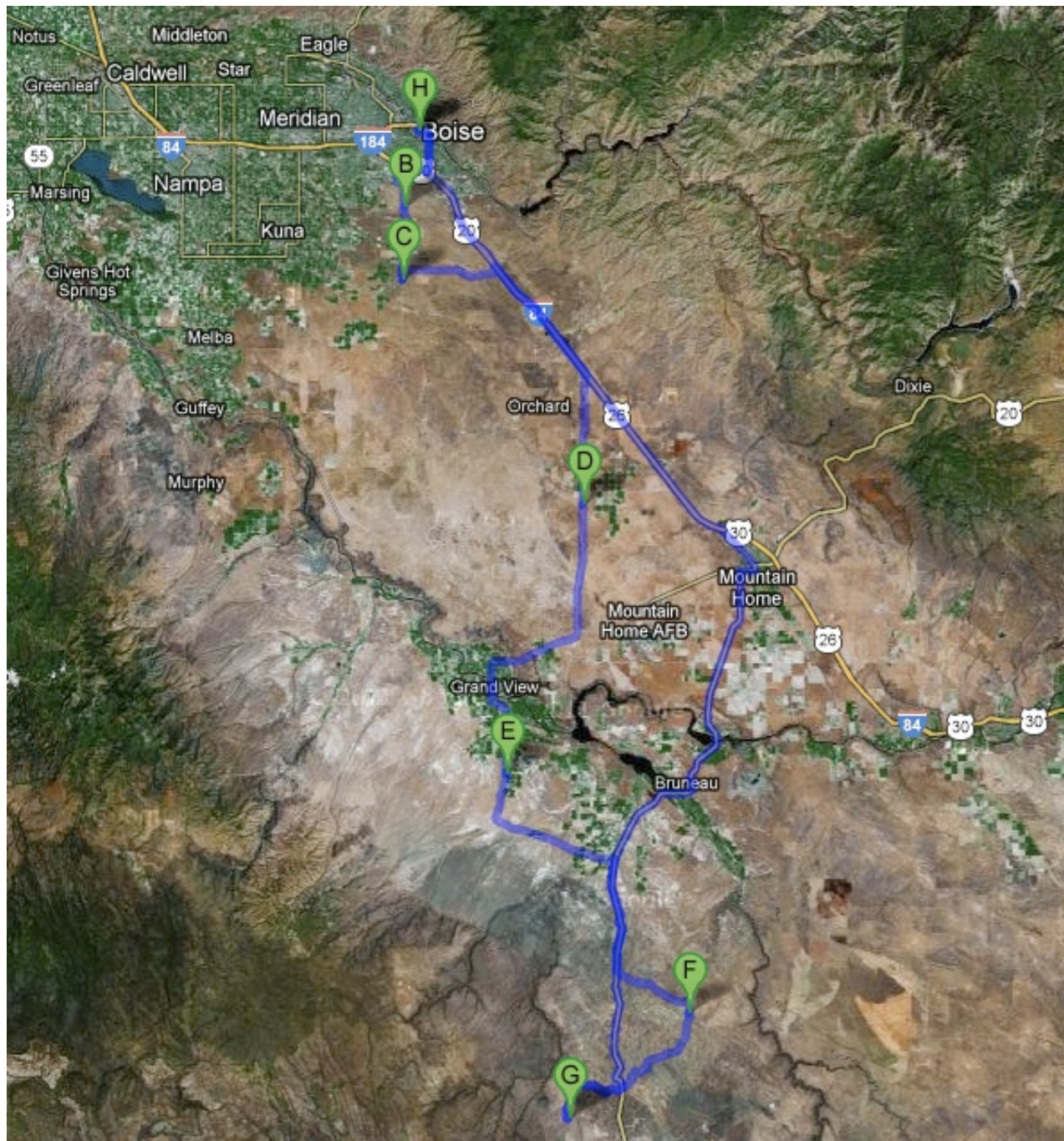
The trail/road out of Wickahoney Stage Stop is even rougher than the way in. A creek crossing and shuffle up a loose rocky face and we came out adjacent to a large military compound and nicely groomed dirt road. This road took us back to Highway 51. Hikers should come in from this side, as the route is more pronounced and much closer than coming in from the Crossing.

If you venture farther west, numerous road and trail systems can take you to some truly epic scenery, including Zeno Falls. To the southeast lie Arch Canyon and the Bruneau-Jarbidge River wilderness [4].

Heading north back to Bruneau, we stopped for lunch and took the hot route (I-84) back to Boise. After roughly 240 miles on primarily dirt roads and trails, it was about a one-hour ride back home taking the beaten path.

Future excursions include Silver City, the south fork of the Owyhee River and Jarbidge, Nev., to complete my ride reporting for Owyhee County—just as soon as the weather clears up.

Total Distance: 301 miles.



- A Boise, ID
- B Pleasant Valley Road, Boise, ID
- C 43.448931,-116.2342
- D Simco Road, Mountain Home, ID
- E Shoofly Road, Grand View, ID
- F Bruneau, CCC Road, ID
- G Wickahoney Creek, ID
- H Boise, ID



References:

1. Wickahoney Stage Stop: <http://idahoptv.org/outdoors/shows/deserthideaways/wickahoney.cfm>
 2. Idaho Centennial Trail. <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/recreation/idahocentennialtrail.aspx>
 3. Indian Bath tub Hot Springs. http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/bruneau/recreation/hikes/indian_hot_springs.html
 4. Bruneau-Jarbidge River Wilderness. http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/bruneau/special_places/wilderness_study_areas/Sheep_Creek.html
-



Sept 2011-January 2012

THE VOYAGE



MY THREE MONTHS SOUTH OF THE BORDER ON TWO WHEELS...

BY: Samuel Stone

This is Part 1 of my almost four month journey to discover our neighbors to the south.

I am recently retired and, albeit on a finite monetary stream, life is good. Mexico, it's always been the great mystery to me, that place I only remember as a young man crossing over the bridge into Juarez so many years ago in the 70's while stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas in El Paso. It's unfortunate that I don't have much in the way of a cognitive memory on how I got back across the border.... Oh but the stories I could tell!

So, in 2008, for the first time since 1978, I went back into Mexico... Baja with a group of folks I had never met. I was wrought with

anticipation and an awkward apprehension. I must say it turned out to be one of the times of my life with folks with whom I still stay in touch. Ironic, that prior to going down, the media had been broadcasting the wrought dangers of Mexico; not to mention I had my own friends and associates berating me over the dangers. I too was becoming extremely apprehensive as I have vague memories of Juarez and federales. In truth I found nothing but kindness and amiable people full of curiosity in Baja.



The locals are restless Warm receptions were always the greeting of the day.



SONORA, MX



Traveling South in the Frontier

We found much of the roads devoid of traffic although one can make extremely good time as the roads are generally in great condition, but a word to the wise.....

Beware the Topes!

Later that same year while riding the ODBR, we were sitting around a campfire with some of the folks I had met in Baja. While laughing and bantering back and forth about our spring fling on the Baja Peninsula, a seed was planted to go south again; and an Epic Adventure blossomed from around that crackling campfire. Erica, whom I've lost touch with and is probably heli-skiing off some northern Canadian mountain or in yet another "Ironman" competition, did a 4 month mostly solo ride, which I highly recommend as winter reading. Link: ["Runnin' Home - Tierra Del Fuego to Oregon!"](#)

Well for me, one thing led to another. Alas I didn't make it, as I ended up on an Island in the middle of the Pacific... but that's another story.

After returning from the Island paradise, I still yearned to fulfill this odyssey south of the border, though I did let it slip into more of "perhaps someday." I fell into the local routine of riding and just enjoying life etc, etc. Then I received an email from one of my companions back on the 2008's ODBR ride - "Radioman" as he is known on "ADVRIDER.COM."

His real name is Mark Donham, hailing from Portland, OR. He said he was going to be in the area in July and wanted to meet-up for lunch. He started stirring up my emotions on doing this ride south, looking for someone to ride along with him as he has embarked on circumnavigating the world.



Batopilas
Copper
Canyon



I told him I might be interested in going as far as Belize...

So now let's fast-forward to the first part of September, and Mark is returning from "Phase II" of his journey... circumnavigating the USA and Canada, arriving at the annual WETFEST Rally in Bend Oregon, where he again asked if I am ready to head south. Reluctantly, I said sure! "Good, the date is set in 3 weeks. We meet up in Tucson." Oh My God, game on.

THE PREPARATION

I know that many spend hours and hours pouring over plans and stressing about what ifs and thats just for a 2-week vacation. I, on the other hand, probably look at it a bit more simplistic... just do it.

I have a **06 Triumph Tiger** and a

07 KTM 990 – both are capable and I would enjoy either for long saddle days; but due to Copper Canyon and the wonderful patch work of highways I see from other threads that I've read about, I'll elect to take "Moya," the 990.

I knew I would need a fresh set of tires so I mounted a new Heidenau K60 Scout (a true 50/50 tire) on the rear and hauled with me a new IRC TR8 to mount on the front before crossing the border. Other than that I did nothing else to the bike... oil change and air filter to be done in Tucson.

Oh, I did need something lockable to secure my valuables, so I mounted the Givi 450 from my Triumph onto the 990. Now I have a place for my laptop, camera and important paperwork.



CHIHUAHUA



The road to Barranca De Cobra aka Copper Canyon

The roads were delightful and for the most part well maintained. We pass through desert and climb the mountains to Creel and then drop into the abyss know as Copper Canyon and come to Batopilis.



DURANGO



The old Colonial City of Durango

A delightfully friendly and clean city that also boasts to be capitol of a state by the same name.

Ah Ha... What to take on an epic ride I managed to get 90% packed up. I chucked the tent and tossed the cooking gear and my beloved Big Agnes sleeping bag. I did pack a REI travel bag rated to +55 degrees. We know the ratings to be a damned lie, so I threw a fleece wrap in for good measure (later tossed), hammock and Kelty tarp (they all pack real small). I never did use these items except for the REI travel bag, but only as a blanket.

Clothing... from my days in the military I knew you only need the basics, so I packed one light weight long pants with the zip off pant legs (you know the hiking type), two pair of shorts (one later tossed), three underwear (the quick drying sports type that can be washed by hand in a sink, hang anywhere to dry and be ready in an hour or two),

riding shirt, tank top, Hawaiian shirt (for out on the town) and three pairs of socks. Let's not forget casual footwear.

So, let's get real as for clothing. We have a tendency to over analyze, and I know I wasn't going to outer space – just another country – so resupply of consumables is easily replenished along the way: Toiletries, socks, etc. Enough said... pack light.

As an Ah Ha moment, I knew I was heading to the tropics – but the mountains can be cold; and returning I knew I may need some warmer gear, so I packed a Gerbing heated vest, heated waterproof gloves, balaclava and one thermal shirt and pants. These items proved to be invaluable!





SPANISH JUST DOES NOT COME EASY TO ME

I've been studying off and on for sometime now and even watch "Telemundo" to see what I can pick up. I'll tell you what I get from it. Spanish soaps are sexually hot in nature! After my travels through the south, it is very understandable, as it is a macho male dominated society; and unlike here, the women seem to reciprocate the attention – but I believe it comes with a price. Anyway, when I was stationed in different parts of the world, I made every effort to at least become proficient in basic communications. So I guess immersion is the best way to go, and I am armed with pocket conversation book and can flap my hands and arms with the best of them.

One other item I think I should talk about is the documentation. As we all know now, you can leave the country; but you must have a passport to return. As trivial as it sounds, don't forget to look at your expiration date. Just for the sake of being prudent and on the safe side, I purchased a cheap wallet and placed in it a small amount of money – 25 USD and 200 pesos – along with an old expired credit card, and um... other ID. This was my toss wallet. Title: I did not need it for Mexico, but other countries will want to see the original, not a copy... safe guard it. One more little item I did that was probably not necessary but hey! I took a couple hundred

dollars put into a "Foodsaver" hide it away, never needed it but didn't hurt either.

That's about it except to head south.

THE BORDER

I could have talked about my ride south but that's not what this article is about. I think the only thing I should mention is riding through southern Nevada and Arizona in the end of September is like riding in an oven.

We met and staged in Tucson and had a couple of set backs along the way, but finally headed towards the border. Now for my selection of the border crossing, I wanted a smaller, more laid back atmosphere, so I selected the border town of Douglas/Agua Prieta.

Like you, I have heard of the horror stories for crossing. Not known for bureaucratic efficiencies, the free zone extends something like 12 miles after which you will need documentation when you start hitting the checkpoints. I am glad I selected this point because, as you cross on the right, just past the gate is the Aduana and migration/banjercito office in one location. Folks were not overly sociable, but not hostile either. I



suspect they understand English, but it is their country... immersion has begun.

Visa was very easy and straightforward. Next comes importing your vehicle, which according to a new law as of June 2011, we must pay a deposit depending on the age of the vehicle. For me that was \$400 USD – I got back \$399 when leaving the country (must have been the exchange rate at the time).

So now I have a 180-day Visa and a 180-day TVIP, and I'm in Mexico. Now all there is to do is head south. Oh... one more item to bring up, insurance. Make sure you have Mexican insurance, as US/Canadian companies don't cover you down there. I found getting it via Internet is cheaper than the border offices.



MEXICO

1.96 million sq km (758,449 sq miles)

The States

- Aguascalientes
- Baja California
- Baja California Sur
- Campeche
- Chiapas
- Chihuahua
- Coahuila
- Colima
- Durango
- Guanajuato
- Guerrero
- Hidalgo
- Jalisco
- State of Mexico
- Michoacán
- Morelos
- Nayarit
- Nuevo León
- Oaxaca
- Puebla
- Querétaro
- Quintana Roo
- San Luis Potosí
- Sinaloa
- Sonora
- Tabasco
- Tamaulipas
- Tlaxcala
- Veracruz
- Yucatán
- Zacatecas



Each one unique in it's own way.

So now we are riding through the state of "Sonora" – looks much like Arizona, except there are very long stretches devoid of traffic. The pueblos we passed through are rough mining type of towns, and the people are more or less stoic toward us, life being hard. As it

was, I was already apprehensive enough, mainly because of the 1000-yard looks and my total lack of the language. While sitting outside a small store taking a break, I had my first interaction – a very pleasant man who spoke broken English and welcomed me to Mexico. He gave us some good routing directions and recommended a good pueblo to stay at for the night. This eased my anxiety immensely.

The first night we stayed in "Sahuaripa." We then traveled on down towards Creel and on into the Famous "Barranca del Cobre" or as know it, Copper Canyon, in the state of Chihuahua. By now people are appearing to be a bit more receptive or perhaps because we are starting to relax. Believe it or not, I think people can sense tension.

One of the anomalies I notice was all of the colorfully dressed people in the middle of nowhere just walking along the road, and I later learned that this is the home of the "Tarahumara," famous for their running abilities. What an interesting history to be found here complements of Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarahumara>

There is also a great book by Christopher McDougall titled [Born To Run](#).

As we continued onward, we

entered our first Mexican metropolis of "Parrel," the home of Poncho Villa, who is honored as a national hero down here. The town is very busy, not laid out well and a little dirty. I later learned from the locals that all the Border States are considered "The Frontier," and it's a hard life there, as acknowledged by the Mexicans I talked to further south. So the first thing we Americans see going in, is the harshness of the environment, so we expect this is all of Mexico – so not true.

Some 256 miles south is the wonderful old colonial city of Durango in the state of Durango. This city has a balance of new and old. It is a very clean city, filled with well-dressed young professionals. This is the first place we felt truly at ease and welcomed. It was here that I had a cultural lesson – it appears it is very inappropriate to wear shorts or open toed footwear in the city; but since we were foreigners, we were forgiven. I did sit up and take notice that everyone (and I mean everyone) takes pride in their appearance – hair in place, well groomed, clean pressed clothes and no body piercing or tattooing (well at least to be seen in public). People started becoming amiable, some wanting to practice there English.



THE MAGIC OF MEXICO'S PACIFIC COAST


Oh Dear God it's Hot down here

Trust me you don't need much in the way of attire here in the tropics, but it grows on you.... Pack Light!



Onward to the Pacific Coast where we picked up the famous Mexico 200 just out of Mazatlan. It is here the most amazing part of Mexico begins. One starts to feel the pulse of this country. In Part II we'll be traveling down the famed Mexico 200, also know as the "Pan-American Highway," which heads straight into Central America, but we'll zigzag our way back n forth across some extremely beautiful country as I share my experiences and emotions of wonderment and discovery.

See you in the Next issue!

UP COMING STATES	NAYARIT/ JALISCO	MICHOACAN/ GUERRERO	OAXACA/ CHIAPAS	CAMPECHE/ QUINTANA ROO
 <p>We're getting in deep now</p>	San Blas Barra de Navidad Manzanillo	Playa Azul Zihuatanejo Pie de la Cuesta	Puerto Escondido Oaxaca Zipolite	Tuxtla Gutierrez San Cristobal de las Casa Palenque



The Start of a New Riding Season

by Craig O. Olsen

I must confess that for the past several months, I also have been following the adventures of Sam Stone and Mark Donham (aka Radioman) on ADVrider as they have ridden through Central America, and as Mark has continued on into South America. [1] Mark is a remarkable person and a very skilled rider who I briefly met at the Hell's Canyon Ride in June 2011.

All who have been following Mark's epic ride report were very concerned when he had two separate riding mishaps after Sam left him to return home. Both involved just Mark and no other vehicles, and they resulted in some bike damage that he was able to repair in order to continue his ride. Fortunately, Mark sustained only minor injuries from which he has made an apparent full recovery, allowing him to continue his ride. I think we were all shocked and saddened when Mark recently announced the tragic death of Kevin John Irvin, age 44, from Whistler, Canada who died when his motorcycle collided with a dump truck 20 kilometers from the city of Potosi in southern Bolivia on March 29, 2012. [2]

Even though I did not know Kevin, his death, as that of any motorcyclist, saddens me. While the details of his accident are not presently available, the outcome is. Anytime a motorcycle is involved in an accident with a dump truck (or any other vehicle for that matter), you can predict the motorcyclist will come out on the short end of it regardless of who or what caused the accident.

With a new riding season soon upon us and several, if not most, having taken a winter break from regular riding, it is appropriate to ask if we are prepared for it? Such a question generally focuses our attention on routine winter bike maintenance and a checklist of things to do before our bike is ready to go. As appropriate as proper bike maintenance is in preparing for the upcoming riding season, perhaps an equally or even more important focus should be on whether or not WE are ready to ride. Are our physical skills and ability to mentally process up to par after a winter hiatus of not riding?

The best way to revive those riding skills is to practice them. Ken Condon, who is a current MSF Rider Coach, chief instructor for Tony's Track Days and author of Riding in the Zone: Advanced Techniques for Skillful Motorcycling, says, "A half-hour's worth of braking and cornering practice in a clean and clear parking lot can have a huge impact on confidence and safety." [3] Unfortunately, Ken notes that few riders will devote precious riding time doing circles and stops in a parking lot, even though this small investment of time pays off with a safer and more enjoyable start to the riding season. Several motorcycling authors describe helpful parking lot drills in their books that target braking, swerving and cornering techniques. [4-6]

There are also excellent instructional DVD's that list a series of riding exercises to improve riding technique specifically for dual-sport riding. [7]

Another alternative is to attend a formal training course. I recommend the STAR Motorcycle Training Programs that can be taken locally. [8] Especially helpful are the experienced rider course and the newly added precision riding course, a 16-hour intensive on-cycle course based on Idaho Police Motor School drills. Some riders take one of these courses yearly or every other year to keep their riding skills fresh.

According to Stacey Axmaker, STAR's program director, "Many riders think that the biggest risk is the car drivers, or that it's the 'kids on sport-bikes' that are the problem. Recent Idaho crash data suggest that while cars do pose some risk to riders, the biggest factor is rider error, and the most common crash victim is a male, over 40, and riding



a cruiser or touring bike. Regardless of how or why it happens, though, in any car-bike crash, it's the rider that loses." [9] In fact, a review of all 7,738 motorcycle crashes statewide from 1996 - 2010 indicated that STAR training is associated with a 79% reduced crash risk. There was also an 89% reduction in the risk of a fatal crash. [8]



In addition to the STAR program courses that are directed primarily to improving street riding techniques, there are a number of courses that riders can take directed mainly to off-road dual-sport and dirt riding techniques. [10-17] Unfortunately, with the exception of one or two, most of these are out of state courses, but are within the region. While I have no personal experience with any of these courses, I have talked with several riders who have, and they highly recommend them.

Whatever you do to get ready for the upcoming riding season, do not go into it unprepared. We all know there are inherent risks in riding a motorcycle. These risks are also offset by the inherent benefits; but there is much we can and should do to minimize these risks, and a refreshing of our physical riding skills and tune-up of our mental processing abilities each season is an essential part of lowering that risk.

References:

1. "Radioman Rides the World...," by Mark Donham.
<http://advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15950430#post15950430>



2. Kevin John Irvin Obituary. <http://action4equalityscotland.blogspot.com/> ;
<http://www.piquenewsmagazine.com/whistler/friends-mourn-kevin-irvine/Content?oid=2295446>
 3. Ken Condon, "Proficient Motorcycling: Season Startup," Motorcycle Consumer News, April 2012, pp. 39-41.
http://www.mcnews.com/mcn/proficient_motor.asp
 4. Ken Condon, Riding in the Zone. Whitehorse Press, New Hampshire. 2009. <http://www.ridinginthezone.com/>
 5. David L. Hough, Proficient Motorcycling. BowTie Press, Irvine, CA. 2000.
<http://www.bowtiepress.com/bowtie/promotor.asp>
 6. Lee Park, Total Control. Motobooks International, Minneapolis, MN. 2003.
<http://www.totalcontroltraining.net/>
 7. Dual Sport Riding Techniques videos. <http://dualsportriding.com/index.php?id=724>
 8. Idaho STAR Motorcycle Training Program. <http://idahostar.org/>
 9. Idaho STAR Program to Reach out to Motorcycle Riders Statewide. Idaho STAR Program, March 5, 2012.
[http://idahostar.org/blog/News_Room/post/Idaho STAR Program to Reach out to Motorcycle Riders Statewide/](http://idahostar.org/blog/News_Room/post/Idaho_STAR_Program_to_Reach_out_to_Motorcycle_Riders_Statewide/)
 10. 5th Gear Dual Sport Motorcycle Training. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb0-nl2E9MI>
 11. AdMo Dirt Bike Services. <http://www.admotours.com/>
 12. Stayin' Safe Advanced Rider Training. <http://www.stayinsafe.com/program4.php>
 13. Dirtbike, dual-sport and adventure motorcycle training. <http://www.pssor.com/>
 14. Motorcycle Training Academy. <http://www.motorcycletrainingacademy.com/dirtbike.php>
 15. Silverstate Motorcycle Academy (Nevada). <http://www.silverstatemotorcycleacademy.com/index.html>
 16. BMW Motorcycle Training.
<http://www.bmwusa.com/Standard/Content/Experience/Events/PDS/ProgramsandCourses/Motorcycle.aspx>
 17. Puget Sound Safety Training Programs. <http://www.pugetsoundsafety.com/>
-