

# THE CRAB POT

May 2004



The Irreverent Publication of the Mid-Atlantic's Most Eclectic Motorcycle Organization

## Notes from the Benevolent Despot

April was a great month for CRABS. Thanks to Jen Seidel, we had T-shirts made up with her awesome logo. There are some left if anyone wants one, mainly mediums. They're a mere \$11.50 (that's cost). The great folks at *Backroads* magazine in NJ are sporting them. Lou Church wore his all the way down on Bourbon Street in 'Nawlins after a long road trip from Gaithersburg on his R850! Maybe Lou will give us his story. Oilheaders Steve Coburn and Kandy Dunn are trucking around Charlottesville with them. Phil Hrusch and Pam Burda are wearing theirs in the Cleveland area and Phil Ager and Elsie Smith of Ft. Washington are sporting theirs, hopefully at foofy BMWBMW business meetings. Thanks to everyone who got one. We'll get more if you want them.

Quite a few CRABS were at the Morton's Open House. I was so busy running around, I didn't even get to see the new GS. Look for Open House info later in the "Pot." Future issues will contain my reviews of Motolights and the Autocomm Active 7 Smart. Initial indications are goooooooooood.

The much-anticipated BMW fuel line recall is out. If you have an R or K bike of 2000-2004 vintage, look for a piece of mail. Steve Whetstone and I have ours. Morton's is going to set up some service days where that's ALL they do. Stand by for more.

Betsy and I did Easter on the Blue Ridge and it was great with the exception of the 7 hour slosh home. Look for a piece of the story later in the Pot. I will say that the RS is not well after that ride and she's going to Charlie this week for a little TLC: even fuel system drier and injector cleaner haven't helped the lurching and hesitation much (developed on the way home).

Please don't let me bore you: I might be the dictator, but you can dictate rides and events yourself. I will not object one bit if you want to use this forum to put forth your own rides and stuff. Maybe someone wants to do one of the "Thunder" events preceding the ride to the wall over Memorial Day? Personally, I stay as far away as possible and this Memorial Day is Dad's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (and the 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday of the Honda 90 he rides).

May is pretty packed for me, with a trip to Vegas, two bike races, a wedding, and Dad's birthday. If you want to do a CRABS thing, you're pretty much on your own. Don't be shy: steal the email list and GO for it. I might be able to go to Brit/Euro Bike Day if the wedding Saturday doesn't wear me out. Attached is more drivel. Enjoy.

El Jefe,  
Fidel Byers

## WHITE CHILI RECIPE

I was a big, fat, hairy liar last month about the white chili recipe, so here's the real deal thanks to Jill Black!

2	TBSP	Oil	(No Arnie, not Pennzoil)
1	Cup	Chopped Unyun	
2	Stalks	Celery, Finely Chopped	
4	Cups	Chopped Cooked Chicken	
2	15 oz.	cans Great Northern Beans	
2	14 oz.	cans chicken broth	
1	11 oz.	cans white corn (drained)	
1	4 oz.	can chopped green chiles	
2	TSP	cumin	
1	can	cream of celery soup	

Saute' unyun and celery in oil. Stir in all other ingredients and simmer.

Jill does a kick-ass job on this with both pheasant and quail meat if her husband and I can shoot straight enough...otherwise it's chicken time!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

\* Ironbutter Scott Davis is readying for the Mason-Dixon 20-20 ride over Memorial Day. Scott is doing the 48-hour event (I think) that will take him all over the East Coast hunting bonus points. Steve Whetstone is doing his first endurance ride by hitting the 24-hour version. If the 24-hour sample route is any indication, Steve will be visiting everywhere from Wilmington, DE, to Ocean City, MD to Bristol, TN in his 24 hours. Steve gets a week to plan his route once the bonuses are revealed. Scott gets his bonus list right before he leaves. Should be interesting. Both are on GS's. Steve's looks like a Bond vehicle with two sets of PIAA driving/fog lights, MP3 player, Ham radio, GPS, cell phone, Autocomm, et al. Steve can link his GPS and ham radio, so you can plot his progress if you want to. He's KB3KOX and maybe he'll give us a web site so we can lojack him.

\* Steve Whetstone and I will be riding 140 miles each around the square in Leonardtown on 16 May to moto-officiate the bicycle races put on in the square by Patuxent Velo Club. Steve and I will start our dizzying journey when the first race goes off at about 0830 and will finish around 1630 (4:30 PM for the normal). C'mon down: it's exciting and FREE.

\*BMWRA National Rally, Canaan Valley, WV 16-19 Sep 2004.

\* *Backroads* Fall Rally, Rocky Gap State Park, MD 9-11 Oct 2004.

## MORTON'S OPEN HOUSE

About a dozen CRABS chowed down at Abell's diner, then chugged over to Morton's. John Marum brought his whole tribe, including son Timmy on a beautiful yellow GS sidecar rig. Mark Bowling signed up for a test of the K12000LT as a comparison to his Harley Dresser. The verdict: still an American motorcycle guy. The Seidels, Betsy and I watched a presentation by Chris and Erin Ratay on their round-the-world ride. It was a good show. There were so many people that it took forever for everything: there was a line for the johns (those porta-johns outside weren't well publicized...). It was about an hour wait to buy anything at the counter too. The food was decent and it was like a mini motorcycle show out front. The Motolights folks collaborated with the Morton's staff on the install of my Motolights. They work! Stand by for a nighttime ride report. A couple CRABS picked up door prizes (look for Jen Seidel's tickets to the tanning place across from Morton's at our future white elephant auction...).

### MAY 2004

<i>SUNDAY</i>	<i>MONDAY</i>	<i>TUESDAY</i>	<i>WEDNESDAY</i>	<i>THURSDAY</i>	<i>FRIDAY</i>	<i>SATURDAY</i>
						1
2 Swap Meet in Gettysburg	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Brit/Euro Bike Day	24	25	26	27	28	29 Ironbutt Event (20-20)
30 Ironbutt Event (20-20)	31 Memorial Day					

British European Classic Motorcycle Day is at Butler's Orchard, Germantown, MD at 10 AM. Talk to Scott Davis about the Ironbutt event over Memorial Day Weekend.

FILL IN THE CALENDAR WITH YOUR OWN THING!!  
(AND TELL US...)

## **Resurrection on the Ridge: An Easter Ride on the Blue Ridge Parkway**

by Mark Byers

16 April 2004

The Blue Ridge Mountains are so named because when viewed from a distance, they rise into the sky in a mystical blue haze. Geologists say rocks in the Blue Ridge are so old they predate existence of the atmosphere: around 1.2 billion years. Accuracy isn't really important in geologic time: a man's lifetime isn't even a heartbeat by comparison. When Africa left our shores and sailed the Atlantic for its present home, the blue mountains were as high as the Sierras but time rounded their shoulders and ate away their bones, leaving only the hardest behind. Their decay continues unabated today, despite our puny efforts to the contrary.

A road meanders down this ancient mountain chain. It took a 52 years, from 1935 to 1987, to build the 469-mile spinal cord called the Blue Ridge Parkway. It starts near Waynesboro, VA and makes its way in a series of well-mannered curves, climbs, and descents to Cherokee, NC. Along the way it passes through gauntlets of forests and flowers and peers over valleys thousands of feet below. It unites cultures, dialects, traditions, and history. Spring is a special time along the Blue Ridge, when a resurrection of flora and fauna occurs on the faces of mountains older than life itself.

Fifteen years ago, Iron-Butt-Rally-winning motorcyclist Ross Copas decided Easter on the Blue Ridge was better than Easter in Ontario, Canada. He started a tradition celebrated by an increasing number of folks North and South of the border: to ride the Blue Ridge Parkway over the holiday weekend. This spring, at the invitation of our friends Steve Coburn and Kandy Dunn, my wife Betsy and I were fortunate to include ourselves among them.

Good Friday was an apt name for the day we left: the weather was sunny with temperatures in the 60's. We boarded our BMW R1150RS "Mathilde" for the trip to Charlottesville, VA to meet Steve and

Kandy, the folks who organized this year's ride. After a short stop at their beautiful log cabin, we scouted sites like the boyhood home of Merriwether Lewis, then hit the highway. I love the US routes, and US 250 took us West of Charlottesville, where we lunched at The Blue Ridge Pig.

Situated between an old car wash and a gas station, the Blue Ridge Pig isn't big or picturesque, but the barbecue beef and pork have put the owner's kids through school, including one graduate of Yale. If you want barbecue with Virginia flavor and Ivy League quality cooked over an open fire, this place is for you. The barbecue beans and unique potato salad are equally tasty. Don't forget to leave Strawberry and Mary and Stevie your business card to add to the massive collection stapled to the walls and ceiling.

When I think of the number 151, it brings back memories (or lapses therein) of a very potent rum, but Virginia 151 Southwest of US 250 is visually intoxicating. We wound through fantastic countryside on the way from Afton and Avon past Wintergreen Resort to the staggering Route 56. There is no doubt about getting your kicks on 56: it's a rollicking romp of a road that claws its way up to the Parkway in a series of rollers and rounders of all radii. Before you start up this delight along the Ivy River past Crabtree Falls, stop in Massie's Mill: I think I saw a sign there for a place called "Flippin-Seaman Orchard." I definitely have to go back to investigate that one.

[The rest, including lodging, landmark, campground, and restaurant/winery reviews, will be in *Backroads* and/or the *Oil Rag*. Please support those guys. You can pick up *Backroads* at Morton's or Bob's BMW or subscribe. Brian Rathjen and Shira Kamil of *Backroads* and Steve Coburn and Kandy Dunn of the *Oil Rag* are all great people and are CRABS too!]

## **EVERYONE'S DRIVING ME CRAZY: And It's a Damn Short Trip**

by Mark Byers      30 April 2004

Here in the DC area, we seem to have more than our share of horrible drivers. Today, I watched a guy in a pickup run a red light: fortunately there was no one in the intersection, but had I left my office 30 seconds earlier, I'd be typing this on an ethereal word processor (sweating in extreme heat, no doubt). We don't have a monopoly on poor driving either: if my travels are any indication, it's nationwide. My exhaustive research revealed the following observations.

There is a proliferation of hideously-colored micro-sedans piloted by post-pubescent males hell-bent on destruction of all life as we know it. The smaller and crappier the car, the more doo-dads it must have in the way of lighted windshield washer nozzles, stickers, neon, and the like. The size of the exhaust is inversely proportional to engine size, so the 0.1 liter motor must have an exhaust roughly the diameter of a New York City sewer pipe. The other essential accessory, short of a stereo that could be used as a public address system, is an aerodynamic wing. The latter is ostensibly to keep the rear wheels in contact with the road while the miniature motor does its work. Last weekend I saw one of these victims of testosterone poisoning being treated at roadside next to his wadded-up chartreuse posemobile.

Another one of the dangerous drivers out there is anyone with a "God is my Copilot" sticker. You would think if the Supreme Being was riding shotgun, the driver would show a little charity, humility, and grace or at least some measure of caution, but quite the opposite is true. Emboldened by the presence of the Divine Being and ostensibly under His protection, said drivers seem to feel invulnerable to the laws of physics. Perhaps they drive carelessly so they can make it to the church, where they'll take up a collection for a parishoner injured in a

traffic mishap. Maybe they're going to an LLLA meeting.

Yes, there is a new group forming in the DC area: "Left Lane Lingerers Anonymous" (LLLA). These folks habitually cruise the left lane at the same speed as traffic in the right, oblivious to folks behind them. They foster more road rage than any other group on the road. I once followed a woman who sat in the left lane for 40 miles. She changed lanes only upon reaching her destination because she had to turn right. I'm actually surprised she bothered to change lanes to turn: perhaps God was not her copilot.

Another DC-area invention is the Cruise Control Support Post. It is apparently in no way, shape, or form connected to anything resembling a turn signal. Other novel uses for this otherwise-useless steering column appendage are the "rubber band storage post," the "hair scunchy storage post," and the "windshield washer and wiper control support arm." I'm having a contest to see who can come up with the most creative use for this thing, because it sure as hell doesn't seem to get any other attention.

One of the most dangerous drivers out there is "Everyone Else." How many times have motorcyclists heard some would-be, could-be, should-be-a-motorcyclist lament "I don't ride. I would, but it's not ME I worry about, it's EVERYONE ELSE." I actually had a lady deliver that one last weekend, along with the qualification "None of my friends drive that way." I replied "Well if EVERYONE drives that way, then it MUST be you and your friends, lady." Allergic to logic, she got in her car without another word. I don't see a job as a diplomat in my future... Telling someone they drive poorly is verbal humiliation in our society and is likely to be met with haughtiness at best, violence at worst. The truth hurts, but unfortunately, it rarely hurts the folks it needs to.

A subset of the "Everyone Else's" is the AME or "Anti-Motorcycle Evangelist," the person whose mission in life is to come over and tell you his goriest motorcycling story. The lines are as predictable as those of an

Amway salesman: "You ride, eh?" (What gave me away? Was it the motorcycle or am I a helmet and Gore-tex fetishist?) "My uncles, cousins, brother, friend, Joe, Billy, Bob, Jim used to ride. He got killed when he hit a truck, a dog, a deer. They found pieces of him in the grill, the hood, the rock, the mouth. You'd never catch ME on one of them things." Mission accomplished, he stomps out his cigarette and waddles over to his 40-foot motorhome (with car in tow). Of course, he took his driver's test 50 years ago in a VW beetle and hasn't had a lick of supplemental training since...

Which brings me to the aged. These are folks whose reaction times could be measured with a calendar. Physically, they have the range of motion of a person in a body cast. I shudder to think of their visual acuity: like Mr. Magoo with wrap-around sunglasses. But driving is a birthright in this country. I would suggest mandatory retesting for drivers over a certain age, but the AARP would hold a "gray panther" rally outside my door and threaten me with flaming torches soaked in Ben-Gay.

The opposite of oldagers are teenagers. They inhabit every corner of the planet and are imbued with such a sense of invincibility that it's a wonder any of them make it to adulthood. Driving a performance sedan bestowed upon them by indulgent parents, they drive as if making it to the mall is a matter of National Security. The human genome has been altered by their exposure to TV and video games to the point where they have developed an ear resembling a cell phone. As if that distraction were not enough, their cars are equipped with speakers so large that passenger space is mercifully limited by their bulk. Emanating from these speakers is profane, incomprehensible, "music" with a bass track that makes Harley riders with straight pipes cover their ears. They rush around, putting people's lives at risk, to make it to such vital activities as...shopping.

Teenagers are the product of another group of horrible drivers: soccer parents. Burdened by making sure their brood gets to

soccer, swim, track, karate practice, these harried people drive their minivans and SUV's with the abandon of a Roman cabbie. They are constantly on the cell phone to the other parent, who is taking an equally overstimulated progeny to some other vital function (without which, the child will NEVER get into a good school). Meanwhile, they're yelling at six kids while changing the DVD in the onboard player. They'd burn at the stake any school bus driver who drove with the same distractions, but to a person, they forbid their children to ride a motorcycle because they're "dangerous."

That brings me to the final group of highway horrors: we the motorcyclists. The sportbike squids are cousins of the "little-car/big pipe" guys and endow their bikes with open race pipes and cut through traffic on the beltway like it was a stunt scene from "The Matrix." Last weekend I heard one of these guys on the beltway before I saw him (that's no mean feat, as I had in earplugs to combat the wind noise around my full-face helmet). The other noisy clan is the "loud pipes save lives" crew: weekend warriors who spend more time polishing their bikes than their riding skills and dress like they just got out of prison for killing their cousins. The sportbike squids wear custom-airbrushed full-face helmets...with shorts and flip-flops. The "outlaws" have on little tupperware bowl hats and enough leather to account for the entire bovine population of Iowa. And since most of these guys also drive cars, you can bet they fit into one of the aforementioned categories as well.

Everyone can see something of himself in the preceding diatribe. Everyone drives cars and rides bikes. Everyone has cell phones. Everyone drives too fast and follows too closely. No one gets up in the morning thinking they're going to kill someone, but everyone runs that risk by driving the way they do. Ghandi said "Be the change you want to see in the world" so perhaps everyone could try a little harder to use care when driving. I'm not talking about me and my friends, mind you, it's EVERYONE ELSE I worry about...