

# THE CRAB POT

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The Salty Publication of the Mid-Atlantic's  
Most Crustaceous Motorcycle Organization

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CRABDICATOR

Winter hit us at the Crab House: we were taunted with 60 deg days the week of 10 January, only to have single-digit windchills the week of the 17<sup>th</sup>. On 19 January it snowed 2" and was 23 degrees not counting windchill. I went from riding the bike to work to hoping the '94 Toyota 4x4 with 132,000 miles would start. It was so cold the dog peed on the porch and went right back inside. Optimistically, I made an appointment for service at Morton's 28 January (but I have a trailer ready just in case).

The Holidays made working on a proper Crab Pot, getting T-shirts, a banner (and yes, Lou Church, stickers) a lower priority than those things should have been. I want to get those things moving but more importantly, I want to make the Crab Pot more entertaining and informative, starting now. We have a guest columnist this month, Judy Gau, who wrote a story of the Great Lakes that you'll enjoy.

That said, I know you're all busy, but if you have any stories to share, rides to share, events of which to make note, let me know. Otherwise, all you'll be hearing about is what I have been able to assemble. Anyway, I hope you enjoy this month's Crab Pot in front of the fire with your beverage of choice!

Crusty the Crabdicator

## OUR NEWEST CRABS MOTO PILOT!!



Congratulations to Emily Whetstone (8), who joined CRABS moto pilots 16 January when her father Steve picked up this '99 Z50 at the York Swap Meet. Emily was already a passenger on her dad's R1150GS, complete with her own intercom helmet and BMW kid's jacket, but now she's riding her own machine. Em's brother Noah (5) will undoubtedly follow suit. Papa Steve is also showing promise on his Honda TL 125 trials machine, except for getting lost in the woods behind his house New Year's Eve...did I say that? He really is a good off-roader: he just can't navigate without his GPS. Mama Jen is bearing up well...

## **DC MOTORCYCLE SHOW**

The DC Motorcycle Show was held 14-16 January at the Convention Center. On Friday I had the pleasure of a short stint in the Ride-to-Work booth with GaithersCrab, Lou Church. It was interesting, as the RTW booth was situated between the Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club and the Hell's Angels. I guess RTW was the buffer. We didn't have nearly enough tatoos...

The show was a little lackluster. I had a conversation with Bob Henig of Bob's BMW and he estimated there were 20% fewer vendors than last year and laid the blame on lack of promotion of the show. Even the swag was light: there weren't nearly as many posters and stickers as last year. BMW North America had the new K1200S there, but it was on a pedestal so you couldn't even sit on it and there was no sign of the new Roadster, RT, or ST.

There was the usual collection of sportbikes and cruisers. One interesting item was at the Kawasaki booth, where amidst the new, flashy iron stood an old war horse called a Concours. It's a real tribute to that model that it still keeps coming back year after year (like the KLR). Ask Kevin Long: I think he's on his third Concours.

Because I had an exhibitor's badge, people kept asking me questions about other people's displays: I talked to a guy about Gold Wing Trikes (I've actually driven...er...ridden one). Hopefully American Honda won't suffer from my (mis)guidance of that guy (all GW Trikes are aftermarket mods). I helped an older fellow look at one of Bob's used bikes (but got no commission, dammit).

I kept my wallet in my pocket, especially where the \$4 hot dogs were concerned, but the one thing I had to buy was a set of custom earplugs. See the review later in this issue. They were required as the "Ball of Death" was behind the RTW booth with three noisy little motos chasing each other around inside and a Gigawatt sound system to broadcast Green Day or whatever kids like these days.

The Metro was the sweet way to get there: parking at the Branch Avenue station was only \$3.50 (free on weekends) and the ride was \$5.30 round trip. I'd probably go again because of the presence of the major manufacturers, but unless they promote this show better, it may cease to exist for lack of vendor participation. Thanks to my neighbor Tim for the company on the way home.

## **CUSTOM EAR PLUGS**

Wind noise has been shown to cause hearing loss, so savvy riders use some sort of ear protection. I usually opt for "foamies" but they itch and can't be used more than a few times. Audiologist Marilyn Navia had a booth at the show, offering custom-molded earplugs for \$60. She put tiny foam plugs way down my ears with a thread attached so they'd come out again and pumped my ears full of goo. After a few minutes to dry, she pulled them out, coated them, and I now have custom earplugs! For slightly more, she will build them around Sony EarBuds so you can get music with your protection, or she can put her custom speakers in for a little more. She also has interfaces for the popular intercom systems like Autocomm. So far, they are comfy and perform well, even around the jets at work. ***Marilyn Navia, MS, FAAA; 305-477-2333; email: plugup@aol.com or look for her at rallies/shows.***

## TOURING THE GREAT LAKES *by Judy Gau*

Who in her right mind would embark on a 3,000+ mile tour after only riding for a year-and-a-half? Me, of course! It was a dream in the planning stages: riding around Lake Superior, Lake Huron, and the Georgian Bay on my BMW F650CS. My friend Roger was a little skeptical at first, but decided if I was that hyped to travel that far, we would do it while the weather was still nice in the upper parts of Canada and the 'States. I could see the wheels spinning in his brain as to whether I would be able to keep up, brave the elements, and tolerate the distance with less experience than many. We planned 10 days of riding 300 miles per day to complete the trip. A few extra days were thrown in for any setbacks that arose.

Our trip started Wednesday August 4<sup>th</sup>. We left in the wee hours of the morning, trying to outrun two weather fronts heading in our direction. We lost. We hit the first front in Ohio. We hit the second one in Michigan on the way to ride the western part of Lake Huron up to the Mackinaw Bridge. It was not what we planned, but we went with the flow: the storms had their path and we had ours. Once we hit the “thumb” of Michigan, the weather broke to clear sunny skies. What I never factored into this tour were the winds that come off the lakes and the unforgiving Canadian fronts. After a few days of struggling to keep the bike upright, we accepted that it would be a windy tour and Roger would just have to put up with my complaining. Crossing the Mackinaw Bridge was a challenge, so of course we had to ride it. They do have a service in the area to ride your vehicle across the suspension bridge, but I felt the previous day's winds prepared me for the crossing. White-knuckled, we made it over just fine, although the winds pounded us. Construction on the Mackinaw Bridge is ongoing, but I never thought in a million years they would close the one cement lane and only have the grated lane open for traffic. I'm sure you all know what we experienced. I'm not sure I would cross the bridge again on a 650cc motorcycle, but I most definitely would with a heavier bike.

We headed up to Sault Saint Marie, Michigan, traveling the southern shore of Lake Superior, then on to the peninsula of Cooper Harbor as the winds decided to pound me further! The Lake Superior tour is so well marked you can leave the maps behind. Entering Wisconsin, we were hit with rain again and it continued through Minnesota until we stopped in Beaver Bay. We met some very nice people along the way and saw many touring Harley riders, which surprised us. One BMW rider from Minnesota followed us in his pickup truck until we stopped so he could check out my F650CS and chat. He and his wife offered us a room for the night at their summer home on the lake, but we declined and traveled further into Minnesota in heavy rain. We must have been delirious to pass up that offer, as we later found no rooms were available in the town of Two Harbors, Minnesota. So on we rode.

Once we hit Canada, the rains stopped. The Canadians at the border were complaining of too much dry weather: their grass was all burned. They hadn't had rain in the last 3 weeks and we thought we were home free with the rain gear. The Canadian terrain was magnificent: much more so than the states. The trees were so green and the lakes more blue. When we thought the scenery couldn't get any more beautiful, it did, time after time. Beauty was everywhere we looked, but

we were unable to snap photos because their road shoulders were gravel in most places and not conducive to stopping.

We saw a young moose who ran into the road and did the "Uh-Oh Dance" when our motorcycles approached. It was a very funny sight to see that little guy trying to work those extra-long legs to get back into the forest. We saw bears, but they were mostly frightened when anyone approached. Moose, deer and bear signs were in abundance, declaring "night dangers." In some places, there were flashing signs warning of the moose. According to the locals, the mosquitoes and black flies drive the wildlife out of the forests and on to the roads. We were very fortunate to not have to make any quick stops along the tour. The road surfaces we traveled around Lake Superior were superb.

While in Marathon, Ontario, heavy thunderstorms descended and the Canadians were pleased. We, of course, were not but finally figured out the right mix of clothing and covers to protect ourselves and our gear. I happened to think of Don Walker and his experience of being struck by lightning while riding and I was a little concerned, but we kept on riding. The rains continued for the next four days! While in Marathon, Ontario, we learned that the area is the capital of gold mining for Canada, but we didn't stick around in the rain to check it out and pan: maybe next time.

We traveled on to Sault Saint Marie, Ontario, completing the Lake Superior Circle Tour while the storms continued. We started the Lake Huron Circle Tour and the rain *still* continued. One night in Blind River, Ontario, the storms were so severe that the power kept going out and my bike was rocking and rolling in the motel parking lot. I was sure it was going down, but it survived!

The Lake Huron Circle Tour was hardly marked and we did indeed need a map to stay on course. The tour took us far away from the lake and the roads were in need of repair. Once we arrived in Tobomory, Ontario, a peninsula between Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay, the rains stopped for a short time. The sun popped out and our clothing dried for the first time in days. What a relief! The peninsula was most beautiful and Roger and I were a tad worn down from the rain, so we decided to take an R&R day to enjoy the small fishing village and shop. What a difference it made in our attitudes to take a day off from riding to enjoy the scenery! My next long trip will be 3 days of riding, then one day off for an attitude adjustment period.

The Canadians were very interested in our view of the upcoming presidential elections, especially about John Kerry, the power outages last year, and terrorism. According to the locals, Canada is not very well prepared for terrorism and they feel their government should be doing more. We had some very interesting conversations all along the tour. Crossing the border back into the states was very challenging. We sat on our bikes in the middle of the Canadian/US Bridge in Sarnia, Ontario for almost an hour while the bridge swayed about freely!

In summary, I encourage everyone to ride Lake Superior at least once in their cycle days: the beauty will speak for itself. Lake Huron is great along the western costal edge, but the remainder is not worth the trip in my opinion. My recommendation would be to tour with a motorcycle larger than 650cc with lots of fairings and to make reservations for overnight stays if possible. Roger and I

decided to go as gypsies, as we were not sure where we would end up each evening, and we were very lucky several times to get the last room available in town because of triathlons and kayaking events being held. Take business cards, as you meet so many wonderful people along the way, you may like to keep in contact with them.

You can pack your cell phone, but most times we were unable to get a signal in Canada, so we found our calling card to be more useful. Fill your gas tank every chance you get: some of the towns don't have working pumps and the towns are miles apart. Most of the gas stations were full-serve, with gas running around \$2.50 a gallon. My electric vest was my most important piece of clothing; I needed it daily due to the Canadian fronts. Most importantly, always pack full rain gear!

This trip was a dream come true for me. I was able to keep up, brave the elements, and tolerate the distance with little or no complaining. On the third day of our tour, we stopped at a Dollar Store in Newberry, Michigan so I could purchase a small pillow: some parts of my anatomy were feeling the effects of riding and I wouldn't have lasted much longer. What a difference it made! We traveled 3,133 miles and still had time to visit my family in Michigan. I still have the pillow and yes, Roger and I are still friends!

## **VINTAGE MOTO SWAP MEET**

Sunday, 16 January, the Potomac Vintage Riders Club sponsored a vintage motorcycle swap meet at the State Fairgrounds in York, PA. Fellow CRABS Randy Black and Buzz Brinig were there to work the show and Steve Whetstone and I made the trip. You already read about Emily's new Z50, but Steve was bent on bringing back something old and British. He was so serious that his minivan sprouted a trailer when we left at 0630 that morning!

There was a good selection of British parts and bikes, some pretty fair Japanese parts and bikes, some apparel, and the usual collection of outright junk that folks are praying someone else was crazy enough to pay them for! I picked up a couple shifters for the TL125's, but Steve didn't score a Brit bike. There were a couple nice examples, but \$4K-\$5K was a lot of change for them. I found an Aerostich Roadcrafter suit for \$350...but I would have had to grow four inches of inseam for it to fit. Damn!

At the accompanying show, we saw everything from beautifully-restored 50cc Honda "monkeybikes" to SL70's to Norton Commando's and BSA's. There were a couple Harley motocross bikes there (remember AMF?) and a couple flat-trackers. Some fat dude walked away with a Honda Reflex (street legal trials, not the scooter) for about a grand. I was the only geek there with a BMW hat and there wasn't a Beemer part to be found.

This was a neat swap meet/show and for five bucks was a bargain. PVR puts on a good event and if you're into "dumpster diving" to search for old parts for your British, Japanese, or American machine, this is for you. Randy managed to sell a rolling chassis for an old kid's dirt bike that I thought would be destined for the scrap bin, so you never know!

## MOTORCYCLE REFEREEING?



Stefan Yench and I, Eastern Shore

Those of you who know Steve Whetstone and I know we have another two-wheeled addiction: bicycles. Both of us used to race a little. We also found a way to combine our passions for motorized and non-motorized two wheelers: bicycle race marshaling and refereeing! If you have watched any coverage of the Tour de France, you know that motorcycles (or motos) bear the brunt of the work for journalists, videographers, officials, and traffic/crowd control.

A bicycle race moto marshal rides in the vicinity of the cyclists, usually in front, to make sure people and traffic know they're coming. That big BMW with high beams and flashers is a lot more visible than a scrawny bicycle with no light. Motos are used because they can maneuver around and among the cyclists much easier than a car. With a flip-up helmet, a moto pilot can talk to the cyclists to inform them of their

time ahead/behind or to tell them of approaching hazards. Sometimes a "moto" will carry a mechanic with spare wheels or medical staff.

A moto ref goes one step further: after taking a one-day seminar and an open-book test on bicycle racing rules, a moto ref takes another seminar so he can officiate on his moto. Moto refs can do everything a marshal can do, enforce the rules of the race, and can slip up beside the "peloton" to communicate with them. Usually moto refs communicate via radio. Steve and I have our HAM licenses, but that's not required: we use portable radios that interface with Autocomm systems and mostly work business-bands.

Whether marshaling or refereeing, "working" bicycle races is a really neat thing to do and it's the best seat in the house for watching the races. We travel all over the Mid-Atlantic, Virginia, Pennsylvania and sometimes go even further (like Georgia) to "work." I put that in quotes because most of us don't consider it work to ride our motorcycles and watch bicycle races! Don't get me wrong, there are days when it is "like work" but they're still better than driving a desk! There is pay, but it's not the reason to get into moto'ing.

The reason you get into it is to see those multi-colored jerseys descending into the fog on the Blue Ridge Parkway at 50 mph, to see the peloton squirm over rolling hills in the Virginia sunshine, or to look out over a valley and see the lead group being paced by a herd of horses in a Pennsylvania field.

If you are interested, please let me know. There is an official's seminar the 19<sup>th</sup> of February and a moto official's seminar the 5<sup>th</sup> of March. If you just want to try your hand at marshaling, that can probably be arranged.

## EASTER ON THE BLUE RIDGE



Ross Copas with Easter Bunnies Jean (L) and Carol

Last year, Betsy and I had the pleasure of joining Ross and Jean Copas and friends from Ontario, Canada and some riders from the US for this annual pilgrimage to the Blue Ridge Parkway. On Good Friday, they'll meet in Staunton, Virginia for dinner. Some will stay at the KOA and some in a motel. On Saturday, they'll head down the BRP to Meadows of Dan, Virginia to either the Willville bikes-only

campground or the Blue Ridge Motel. They'll have a fine dinner there, tour Chateau Morrisette winery, and take in the sights Saturday, then will head for home Easter Sunday.

Betsy and I had a great time last year (except for a rainy ride home). Brian and Shira were kind enough to put the story of our trip in the June 2004 issue of **Backroads** Magazine (the largest, finest regional publication in the nation - shameless plug). Put this ride on your calendars. More info will appear in next month's edition of the Crab Pot.

## PICTURE OF THE MONTH



  
Centraal Bureau  
Rijvaardigheids  
bewijzen

You are driving your car,  
Are you allowed to stay behind this bike?



YES



NO