

THE CRAB POT

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Most Warm Motorcycle Organization

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DRIVEL FROM THE CRABDICATOR

February and March pretty much suck. You'd think that having all that time inside because of the crappy weather would leave me with plenty of time to attend to administrative details. No dice. I haven't finished much of what I wanted to do and my loving, understanding wife is probably ready to hire out all my chores to someone more capable and motivated (like a corpse). It must be the lack of sunlight, but that chair in front of the fire just looks so damn good at the end of the day.... Thank you for the answers to the driving test question on last month's Picture of the Month. Most of you did not notice the text at all... The correct answer depends upon your marital status (and whether she rides pillion).

I'll try to arrange something for April: how about a trip to Morton's Open House on the 16th? There's a vintage trials the next day too.... Stay tuned.

Crab-Daddy

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. Contact Kandy Dunn at teclocks@nexet.net for details!

BACKROADS SPRING BREAK

May 6, 7, and 8 will see Mama Crab and I going to *BACKROADS* Magazine's Spring Break in Jim Thorpe, PA. Brian and Shira always put on an outstanding mini-rally. You need to get your reservations at the Inn soon, so if you want more info, check out www.backroadsusa.com or email me and I'll give you the particulars.

We're going up Friday and at some point over the weekend, we'll be visiting the Yeungling Shrine...er...brewery in Pottsville, PA. We'd love to have your company.

THE AMAZING STORY OF BLUE LOU HANRATTY AND THE SCREAMING BLUE SPACE ALIEN TORPEDO FROM HELL

This is the amazing story of how Blue Lou Hanratty got his name. You probably know someone like Lou: there's one in every crowd...kinda. Lou is the sort of guy who goes through life pushing on doors marked "PULL." He's in his forties, but heaven knows how he survived to get there. Lou is an accountant, not just professionally, but genetically. Lou attempts to hide his receding hairline with a bad combover that puts his part somewhere South of his left ear. He isn't a fat man, in fact he's pretty scrawny and has no ass to speak of, but he has the little belly that comes standard with middle age. Physically he's about five-four but in his mind he's six feet tall. At 40 he got the "mid-life crisis" and his long-suffering wife took the Pekinese and moved home to mother when Lou bought the first motorcycle he could find.

To say Lou "rides" a motorcycle is being generous with the word "rides." Lou "operates" a motorcycle. His skills are so poor that if the road does anything other than run straight as a Baptist preacher, Lou runs off into the prickly bushes. He has a love/hate relationship with the insurance people: they love to charge him ridiculous sums of money for coverage, but his adjuster hates to see him coming. Lou has a bevy of excuses for arriving way behind the group (if at all): headwinds, deer, elephants, land mines, terrorists, etc. but his favorite excuses center around conjured-up motorcycle faults. After each successive crash, Lou's answer is to purchase: 1) more accessories, or 2) a bigger, faster motorcycle.

You see, Lou is one of those people who can never find fault with himself, but finds many with his ride. If you or I had Lou's riding-skill deficiencies, our brains would scream "RIDING SCHOOL" out of sheer self-preservation. Somewhere in Lou's brain there's a translator that considers his awful riding, then takes rational thoughts like "RIDING SCHOOL" and translates them into things like "TITANIUM BOLT KIT," "BILLET ALUMINUM CHAIN GUARD," or "FLASHING SPARK PLUG WIRES." If Lou crashes, then clearly his highly-accessorized mount must require some sort of amazing new device that will make it the finest-handling, best-looking, fastest machine on the planet. Whoever came up with the expression "A fool and his money are soon parted" must have: 1) owned an aftermarket parts business, and 2) known Lou.

Lou doesn't stop with the bike where accessories are concerned. His continued longevity despite all his mishaps is the result of owning nearly every piece of riding gear ever manufactured. When he goes for a ride, Lou looks like a middle-aged Power Ranger kitted out with dayglo leathers, gloves, boots and race-replica helmet. He's pitifully slow and inept at getting dressed, however, because he does stupid things like putting on his gloves before his leathers or his helmet. That, coupled with the fact that he probably got there a half hour late, means we're forever waiting for him at restaurants.

Why do we wait for this man? The answer is as simple as Lou: he's a really nice guy. There's more than one person in our riding group who got a fairly nice, cheap bike with very little damage (and a salvage title) after one of Lou's off-road trips. He gives away a fortune in leftover OEM parts after one of his accessorizing sprees and a mountain of barely-scratched riding gear after one of his crashes. Lou isn't cheap and he isn't afraid to share! He sponsors the local race series, the toy run, the poker run, the Ride for Kids, and every other (deductible) charitable effort that can be linked with motorcycling. That's

because Lou is filthy rich. Light-your-cigar-with-money rich. You see, right after his divorce Lou was feeling very un-accountant-like and bought a Mega-Millions ticket (his first and only). His stupid Irish luck resulted in it being a winner, of course.

So there we were, the usual band of Sunday-morning-ride suspects, waiting for Lou to arrive so we could do a group ride to Butler's Orchard for the annual British/European Motorcycle day. We're an eclectic group: "Captain Randy" the pilot on his vintage CB750, "Retired Red" on his BMW K75 sidecar rig, "Daring Danny" on his dual-purpose KLR 650, "Mister Murphy" the principal on his Norton Commando 750 (I still can't bring myself to call a principal by his first name), "Software Steve" the computer engineer on his tech-laden BMW GS, "Pigman Phil" the snowplow driver on his Concours, and me, "Dangerous Dozer" the narcoleptic freelance writer (hey, it's UNDER CONTROL) on my Suzuki SV 650. We were waiting, not so much to see Lou, but to see what sort of amazing machinery he would be abusing that day.

We were not disappointed. About three cups of coffee into the meal at Cain & Abel's Restaurant, Bar, and Filling Station ("Get ur Lotry Tikets here"), we saw a headlight in the distance and heard the distinctive, tortured screams of an inline-four motor being overrevved by an incompetent rider missing a shift. Ahhhhhh, Lou. We pushed aside the dusty blinds to see him wobble up on his latest mount...a Honda CBR 900RR. Now, giving Lou a CBR is like giving your baby a loaded Colt for a pacifier, but not quite as safe. Lou was above the age of consent, however, and had the cash so the dealer was happy to oblige. He turned the bike off using his personal technique...he stalled it...and put the sidestand down so he could waddle off, swathed in the latest color-coordinated leather riding suit with Japanese Kanji matching that of the bike. I secretly suspect the Kanji means "Expensive Deathwish" or "Rich Idiot" but I have yet to be able to confirm that.

"Hi Lou!" we all intoned "Glad you could make it!" And we *were* glad because Lou is a constant source of conversation and entertainment to our group as well as a great source of parts and used riding gear. Unable to wait, Captain Randy inquired "When did you get the CBR?" With a gleam in his eye, Lou replied "Ohhhhhhh, well....you know I had the Ninja, but it didn't handle worth crap and I couldn't get the right Power Commander program and spark plug wires, so right after I hit the Marum's fence, I bought this CBR." "Cool!" I said, mentally calculating the cost of replacing the plastic and buying the thing after Lou's next foray into the outback. "Yeah" said Lou, "it keeps missing shifts and giving me false neutrals, though so I'm thinking of getting a solenoid quick-shifter setup I saw in a catalog." See what I mean? Cha-ching!

We quickly escorted Lou inside so he could eat and get going before the weekend was over. It wasn't until another couple cups of coffee, some scrapple, and some hotcakes and syrup went down that Lou was ready to go again. Then, of course, after fifteen minutes of fighting his way into his gear, he had to go back inside to download the coffee... At least our bikes were properly warmed up by the time we finally got on the road. Led by Software Steve and his Tandygarmingellan X10million satellite navigation/communication system and decoder ring, we set off for the Brit/Euro Bike Day. Giddy with anticipation, we had no idea what was about to transpire...

To Be Continued...

PICTURES OF THE MONTH



"Danger Dave" Black on the new Montesa RT4 Fuel-Injected 4-Stroke Trials Bike Molesting a Snow-Covered Quarry in Kansas

