

# THE CRAB POT

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## **MORTON'S OPEN HOUSE**

The Usual Suspects met at Abell's Diner in Clements, MD: Red Sciarra, John Marum, Danny Bishop, Tim Pugh, and my wife Betsy and I (no sign of Blue Loo Hanratty this time). We had a spirited ride over Route 218 and arrived about a half hour after the soiree started. Even so, I couldn't get on the R1200ST until around noon, so we bummed around. We listened to Dale Coyner give a nice talk on his book "Motorcycle Journeys Through the Appalachians" and bought an autographed copy. His photos were excellent.

We saw many old friends and fellow CRABS. The Seidels showed up, as did Phil Ager. Oilheads Club gurus Steve Coburn and Kandy Dunn came up from Charlottesville. I already wrote about the ST (probably much to BMW's chagrin) but the bike IS excellent despite my flight-test-engineer nitpicking and I'd have one in a heartbeat if I had a spare 15 grand laying around. Tim, Steve, and I saw an excellent demo of a tire plugger (more later).

At the closing ceremonies, Tim Pugh scored a fantastic door prize: a coin bank (don't everyone "Ooooooh" at once). It was a fun day and wonder of wonders...it DIDN'T RAIN! Check out more highlights at [www.mortonsbmw.com](http://www.mortonsbmw.com).

On the way home, Tim, Betsy, and I went to Tim's Riverhouse II at Fairview Beach, VA (Route 696 off Route 218) and had some good seafood. [www.tims2.com](http://www.tims2.com) We were home well before dark (bad plan: Tim still had time to do yard work). Another excellent day at an excellent dealer!

## **BACKROADS SPRING BREAK**

May 6, 7, and 8, Mama Crab and I went to **Backroads** Magazine's Spring Break in Jim Thorpe, PA. Jim Thorpe used to be known as Mauck Chunk (they claim it's an Indian word for "sleeping bear" but it sounds more like what I did in college). They renamed the town after the famous Native American Olympian (I would have renamed it too...). It was a booming coal/railroad/canal town at one time and of the 26 millionaires in the US at that time, 13 of them lived there.

We stayed at the beautiful Inn at Jim Thorpe, a B&B/Old Hotel Brian and Shira had chosen as rally central. It was great! We liked to sit on the porch and people-watch whilst enjoying a malted beverage. We did a lot of sitting and watching because I'd been sick for a week and my sinus infection was kicking my butt. Add viral conjunctivitis of the eyes to that and I was off the motorcycle and riding passenger while Betsy piloted the 4-runner.

Despite my maladies (coincidentally, Brian Rathjen was afflicted in the same way except for the eye thing) we had a great time hanging out with some of the Backroads Usual Suspects ("The Tanked Bags") like Brian, Shira, Jeff Bahr, Sean and Renee Hanbacher, etc. Friday's dinner was a superb thing held at a restaurant converted from an old house. Our conversation was accompanied by their blind house piano player who knew every song ever written. Rathjen even joined in on one of the house guitars.

I must have looked particularly bad during dinner, because the next day, Betsy said "You're going to the doctor!" I don't argue with the woman who puts up with all my hobby insanities, so while the rest of the gang headed for cool places Saturday morning, we headed for the walk-in clinic. I left there armed with some powerful drugs and we poked around Jim Thorpe for the afternoon.

That night we listened to the tales of folks who had ridden to the Yeungling Brewery (sob!) and to Centralia, home of the eternal subterranean coalmine fire. That night at the bar, I was feeling much better (or maybe it was just the beverages). Norm Smith and his lovely wife Denise joined us for drinks and somehow Denise left with my CRABS T-shirt (unfortunately, I did not get to see her actually put it on) and fortunately for everyone, they did not have to witness me taking it off.

The next day was bittersweet as usual, having to bid goodbye to all the great people from **Backroads** and their writers, readers, and friends. If you ever get the opportunity, Jim Thorpe is a really quaint, historic town and it would be great for a weekend getaway. They have rafting, mountain biking, or just farting around and the motorcycling roads are good too. They also have an excellent walk-in clinic...

### **BRITISH/EUROPEAN MOTORCYCLE DAY**

This is becoming an annual CRABS event. Butler's Orchard, in Germantown, MD plays host to this excellent celebration of classic British and European motorcycles. This year's featured Marque was Ducati and there were many fine examples of both the old and new from Bologna, Italy there. The rest of the continental brands were well represented as usual too. If you're into vintage bikes, especially the British ones, this is a great show/swap meet.

I got to hang out with the Potomac Vintage Riders and the Mid-Atlantic Vintage Trials guys. CRABS Randy Black and Buz Brinig were there, Randy on his BSA 441 Victor savage 4-stroke trials machine and Buz on his yellow Yammie 2-stroker. Both rode extremely well in the two demonstrations MAVT held for the crowds. Randy doing tight turns and riding the loose, off-camber stuff on the booming BSA was a real crowd pleaser. One of the fellas on an SWM machine was super-smooth, doing "floater turns" with the front wheel off the ground. The old guys can ride the old machines.

I saw Frank Dawson, Steve Whetstone, Jen and Joe Seidel, and PA CRAB Fred Hujanir there. Red Sciarra was reportedly there, but I did not have the pleasure of seeing our diminutive, Latin-spouting, multi-ethnic raconteur. Norm Smith was there, having put 300 miles on his new R1200RT (and loving every minute of it). This is one to put on your calendars for every May.

### **HOUSTON, WE HAVE A THONG!**

OK, those of you who have been waiting for me to get off my fat keester and get CRABS apparel...I didn't, but Jen Seidel DID! Bless her heart, because Jen went to the net and got our logo put on everything from dog T-shirts to...a THONG. Yes friends, it's scary to have CRABS in your underwear, but we've got them in our boxers, camisoles, T-shirts, and "interesting underwear." Check out all the offerings at <http://www.cafepress.com/chesriders>

### **FINALLY! A CRABS EVENT!**

Once again, the erstwhile Ms. Seidel has come through where I have failed and offered their farm for a CRABS event on 18 June!!! Stay tuned for more, but tentative events include a barbecue and some TRIALS demonstrations!

## **MORTON'S BMW FLYING CIRCUS RIDE**

OK, they're not really going flying, but they are going to the Flying Circus Aerodrome in Bealeton, VA for Motorcycle Day! Join them Sunday, July 31 for a ride to the Flying Circus Airport/Airshow. It's half price day for motorcycle drivers and they want to pack the place with BMWs! Don't worry, though, all brands are welcome on a Morton's ride!

Meet at Morton's BMW at 9:00 am and get going by 9:30. They'll take a nice ride through the countryside and stop at a restaurant for lunch. After lunch, it's off to the Circus -- the Flying Circus, that is! The airshow starts at 2:30 pm, so they plan to get there before 2:00. Biplane rides are available before or after the show, depending on the weather and pilot availability. This is a fair-weather only ride and if it is raining, it will not be held.

Betsy and I have been to the Flying Circus Airshow and it's a blast. Old airplanes doing great stunts and some schtick for the kids too makes for a great day. Take your sunscreen and lots to drink. The Flying Circus Aerodrome is on US17 North of Fredericksburg/Falmouth, VA, just past Hugo's Skate World, the place with the giant roller skate out front.

I will not be going, but if you want to organize a group ride from here to Morton's, use the mailing list and go for it!

## **EAST-COAST DRIVING ACUMEN RATED (IT SUCKS)**

NEW YORK (CNN/Money) - When faced with a written test like ones given to new drivers applying for licenses, one in ten currently-licensed drivers couldn't get a passing score according to a study commissioned by GMAC Insurance. The GMAC National Driver's Test found that nearly 20 million Americans, or about 1 in 10 drivers, would fail a state driver's test if they had to take one today. More than 5,000 licensed drivers between the ages of 16 and 65 were administered a 20-question written test designed to measure basic knowledge about traffic laws and safety. They were also surveyed about their general driving habits.

**Drivers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states did worst.** Twenty percent of test-takers failed there. **The state of Rhode Island leads the nation in driver cluelessness according to the survey.** The average test score there was 77, just eight points above a failing grade. Those in neighboring Massachusetts were second worst and New Jersey, third worst. Northwestern states had the most knowledgeable drivers: in those states, just one to three percent failed the test. In Oregon, the average test score was 89.

According to the study, many drivers find basic practices, such as merging and interpreting road signs, difficult. For instance, one out of five drivers doesn't know that a pedestrian in a crosswalk has the right of way and one out of three drivers speeds up to make a yellow light, even when pedestrians are present, the study said. Drivers not only lack basic road knowledge, but exhibit dangerous driving behavior as well. Younger drivers are the most likely to fail a written driving test while those between the ages of 50 and 64 are the most likely to pass.

[Editor's note: The test was not administered in Southern Maryland because the test takers were run over by numerous drivers in black Monte Carlo SS's with little pictures of Calvin peeing on a Ford logo in their back windows.]

Test scores follow:

## DRIVING TEST SCORES

Nation -- 82.7

**1. OR -- 89.4**

**2. WA -- 88.4**

3. Ia -- 87.7

**4. ID -- 87.5**

5. WY -- 87.4

6. VT -- 86.6

7. NE -- 86.5

8. WI -- 86.3

**9. MT -- 86.2**

**10. WV -- 86.2**

11. MN -- 86.1

12. ND -- 85.6

13. NC -- 85.2

14. IN -- 85.1

15. AL -- 84.7

15. VA -- 84.7

15. NV -- 84.7

16 MS -- 84.7

19. OH -- 84.3

19. SD -- 84.3

21. CO -- 84.2

22. KS -- 84.0

23. MI -- 83.8

24. NH -- 83.7

25. TN -- 83.4

26. ME -- 83.2

27. AK -- 83.1

27. SC -- 83.1

29. GA -- 82.9

29. NM -- 82.9

31. OK -- 82.8

32. TX -- 82.7

33. UT -- 82.6

33. AZ -- 82.6

35. MS -- 82.5

**35. DE -- 82.5**

35. KY -- 82.5

**38. PA -- 82.1**

39. LA -- 81.7

40. IL -- 81.6

41. FL -- 81.1

**42. CT -- 80.9**

43. CA -- 80.4

**44. MD -- 79.8**

**44. D.C. -- 79.8**

**44. NY -- 79.8**

**47. NJ -- 78.3**

**48. MA -- 77.2**

**49. RI -- 77.0**

That bunker in the Pacific Northwest is looking better all the time, folks. And how about my home state of West Virginia, eh? Smarter than all those Ivy Leaguers...

## PICTURE OF THE MONTH

Memorial Day: it ain't just a 3-day weekend.

### Normandy Cemetery france 10,944 Americans Killed

