



The Crab Pot

*The Crabby publication of the mid-Atlantic's
most Mellow moto club*

June 2007

The Motorcycle Club Newsletter of Record

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As If It Weren't Bad Enough...

FORESTVILLE, Md. - Police are conducting rolling roadblocks as part of the investigation into a fatal crash that shut down the Capital Beltway Wednesday night.

Since 10 a.m. police have been taking away lanes as needed along the Outer Loop between Pennsylvania Avenue and Ritchie Marlboro Road.

The seven-car, chain-reaction crash in Forestville killed two people and

injured 15, including two police officers, authorities said.

It started at about 7 p.m. when a Prince George's County police officer spotted a speeding motorcycle and positioned himself to stop it on the Inner Loop, police said. The motorcycle rider swerved in front of a civilian car and sped away, causing the officer's car to hit the civilian's. That car rolled down an embankment onto the Outer Loop, where five other cars crashed into each other.

Two people in the car that went over the embankment died. Prince George's County Police have identified them as Kevin McCarter, 40, of Ft. Washington, Md. and Sidney Clanton Jr., age unknown, of Buffalo, N.Y.

Two of the injured were police officers. One was flown to a hospital with life-threatening injuries. The other was also hospitalized, but his injuries were not considered life-threatening.

Police were looking for the motorcycle and rider believed to be responsible. Prince George's County Police have not released a detailed description of the motorcycle or its license plate. However, Cpl. Clinton Copeland tells WTOP it was a high speed, lightweight sports cycle.

"We still don't have more of a description, but we do know it was a crotch rocket," Copeland says. The accident and rescue effort caused the highway to be closed in both directions, backing up traffic for miles. 🍷 (More stupidity on page 2)

Stupidity Continued

The previous story was from the WTOP Radio News web site. As if the story weren't bad enough, here

are some of the public comments posted on the site:

"I love motorcycles but I hate "crotch rockets". They are basically high performance race style bikes that have somehow made it to the street. I have never, ever seen one ridden responsibly. Their owners weave in and out of traffic, never obey the speed limits and they are daredevils that put other's safety at risk. I sat next to one that pulled a wheelie for a good 1000 feet one evening. What was the purpose? Who was this clown showing off for? Its time they ban these bikes for street use.

As for the cops that gave chase? Probably a stupid thing to do given the circumstances. I hope they find the idiot that caused this and hang him by his testicles. As for the cops, PG county says it all. They need to review their tactics in this situation. I think the reason you see few of these people pulled over is their cruisers are no match for the bikes or their stupid riders."

"I drive the beltway stretch where this happened almost daily. I have seen these crazy motorcycle drivers out there a bunch of times. Literally hitting what I'm guessing would be 100 - 120 mph when the Beltway is clear - pass me like I'm standing still. Sometimes in groups, sometimes solo. Thrill riders who put everyone else at risk. I often wondered how the cops would ever be able to catch them if they didn't stop. I know radios go faster than bikes, but it has really been nuts sometimes. Its too bad the two people killed weren't the idiots on the bike. Sorry to be so harsh. These guys give motorcyclists a bad name. If they want speed, take it to the race track."

"These "bullet bikes", "crotch rockets", "jerk on two wheels", etc. should be regulated in a similar manner to high performance aircraft."

"For a bike of a certain horsepower, or "thrust to weight" ration[sic], the following (or similar) should apply: Their drivers should be at least 21 years old (if not older), and should have to undergo a periodic testing cycle review (i.e., annually or every 2 years). Their bikes should also be equipped with "transponders" that would (1) allow cops to track them down if their driver breaks the law (2) not allow the bike to work if they are disabled. This may sound Draconian, but so is banning these types of bikes."

"What the jerk did on the beltway is cowardly and inexcusable, and that guy should be put into jail for a very long time (Personally I hope they ship him to Guantanamo prison) and never allowed to drive anything with wheels (including a child's tricycle)."

"Outraged and disgusted by the worst of our drivers. Maybe if Insurance companies refused to insure these "sport bikes" everyone would stop buying them."

"I realize that there are a multitude of responsible motorcycle riders on the roads. I also have observed that none of the responsible riders ride "sport bikes."

"Very simple problem here. These so-called "crotch rocket" motorbikes are a cheap bang for the buck and these irresponsible punks are terrorizing our highways and neighborhoods. Zero to 100 in no time and then add the average age of these riders is less than 25 years old with very little experience then you have a recipe for what they deserve."

A few weeks ago a kid was doing 90+ on a road in Prince William County and he T Boned a school bus turning in front of him. He died instantly at the scene and his body caught fire after the impact making his identity difficult to determine. By the way the speed limit on the road was 45mph!"

"THESE CROTCH ROCKET TERRORISTS ARE JUST AS BAD AS ANY TERRORIST COMING INTO OUR COUNTRY AND SETTING OFF BOMBS OR CRASHING INTO BUILDINGS. I BLAME THE INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT FOR MAKING THESE BIKES EVEN LEGAL TO BUY!!!"

And finally, the ultimate stupidity from the WTOP article, wherein one of our Montgomery County lawmakers (where they want to either ban or control everything) had the following to say:

"State Delegate Bill Bronrott of Montgomery County says it may be time to get those bikes off the roads. **'They are potential death machines in the wrong hands,' says Bronrott. 'And I think we should look at the possibility of saying these should be used on race courses rather than public highways.'** He says Maryland State Police are contacting jurisdictions around the country to see how they handle the so-called bullet bikes."

Crab-Daddy'S Commentary

So, here we go again: an asshole on a sportbike does something stupid and negative public opinion fires up, calling for bans and other draconian measures. I didn't print all the comments (and they were numerous). The vast majority were anti-bike, including some that

suggested hitting riders on the beltway if you don't approve of them.

Of course, some politico from a county in which this didn't even happen (this was in PG county and the congressman is from the people's republic of Montgomery) has to weigh in. It's no surprise: I met a member of the House from Calvert County last fall and when she found out I was a motorcyclist, the next words out of her mouth were "Oh yeah, I see you guys on the beltway, zipping in and out of traffic." I had to explain to her that I ride a "touring" bike with my wife on the back, but I could see her mind was pretty much already made up. In her mind, "bikers" come in two flavors: "outlaws" and "guys who zip in between cars on the beltway."

We clearly have two problems: 1) a public perception problem that a sportbike "can't be ridden responsibly" and 2) a real problem of people on sportbikes who DON'T behave responsibly. It's time for some leadership on our part, because it's clear that if we don't start policing ourselves, people who know far less about motorcycles will do it for us. The Maryland State Police have done what they call "Road Rocket Roundups" in the past, pulling over whole groups of sportbikers leaving places like the dragstrip at Budd's Creek. Some of it is justifiable and some is not. How long is it, however, before the same broad brush paints us all with the same black color? It's time for us to tell our friends to chill. 🍷

On a lighter note

In July, we said "See you later!" to our good friend Captain Randy Black who added the appellation "USN Retired" to the end of his name.

Randy, Jill, Erin, and Tanner sold their house here in Southern Maryland and moved back to their homeland of Kansas. In typical Randy fashion, he said "I've gone from being a Program Manager responsible for billions of dollars to being homeless, unemployed, and living in my mother's basement."

I'm sure none of those situations will last long, but the "homeless" thing might take a while since he has to find a garage with space for about 14 motorcycles... Anyway, the "Usual Suspects" will miss him and we wish him the best of luck in Wichita. 🏍️

Body armor

I do a lot of bicycle race officiating from my motorcycle. In so doing, I have to wear a lightweight striped shirt to identify myself as a referee. The problem is that a lightweight striped shirt doesn't offer me squat in the way of protection from a fall. This fact was driven home to me when one of my fellow officials was forced off the road by a team car earlier this year, totaling his bike.

While my colleague wasn't injured, his misfortune highlighted the fact that we are at risk out there and have very little upper body protection. Enter a good idea: why not get some lightweight, ventilated protection to wear UNDER the shirt? As Randy used to say, plagiarism is an art form, so I stole the idea of an official from Philly, Mr. Bill Elfring, and invested in some Bohn Body Armor.

Bohn Body Armor is pretty simple: it is a mesh coolmax jacket with a full zipper outfitted with shoulder, elbow, and back pads. It's form-fitted enough to wear under just about any garment, including a mesh official's shirt. While it is not

abrasion-resistant, the padding does offer protection from the initial fall. It sure as heck is better than nothing!

I used the garment at the National Championships in Seven Springs over a 12-day period and later during the men's pro races during a week at Altoona and I have to say I am quite pleased. The jacket is not too hot to wear even on the steamiest days and you can soak it with water and let it evaporate if you like. The pads are lightweight and well-placed. Washing the jacket out is simply a matter of taking out the pads, running it under the shower, wringing it dry, and finding it ready to wear again in the morning.

Bohn also had a deal on some motocross pants and some jerseys as well when I went online to look for armor. They also make a lower-torso garment for wear under jeans or other pants. Check out Bohn if you don't want to break your bones. Go to www.bohnarmor.com. 🏍️

The red report

Two of the Usual Suspects, Red Sciarra and Frank Dawson, went to the RA Rally at the Biltmore. Red sent me the following report in an email titled "Another Tale of Joy and Woe." Apparently our two talkative vintage friends had quite the experience, with Red experiencing the good news/bad news type of ride. I will not go on about it, as it is best viewed in his own words. Here goes:

Red's Ride Report

Hail Crabdicator! This is a report of the Ashville Trip accomplished by Frank Dawson (R80) And Red Sciarra (K75S). We made Statesville NC around 17:00 and put in at Days Inn. This leg of the trip was

harrowing since I had to push the combo to uncomfortable speed on rough road around Winston Salem, NC. Awful traffic and no fun at all.

Next day at 08:00 we head for Asheville and encountered heavy truck traffic and a number of long right-hand turns and a mountain before reaching the Biltmore estate around 10:00. There were some vendors and Hannigan Sidecars had a display. Frank bought a Biltmore coffee for \$2.00. There were hundreds of Beemers. We departed for lunch in the All Souls area and found the Country Café. I tried some Italian on the hostess and received an All Souls Sam Witch. That's prosciutto, provolone, and greens on a wonderful seasoned toasted Italian bread. Bella, Bella, Bravo! No wine or beer this trip: we tee-totaled it all the way.

On to the Wheels Thru Time exhibit in Maggie Valley, Franks highlight for this trip. I noted 10 Harleys and 1 Henderson then 10 more Harleys and an airframe and 10 more Harleys and an Indian 4, etc., etc.. Back over the mountain to Asheville and the Days Inn at Biltmore East. Did I mention my 69 years caught up with me and the Gespann had wiped out any stamina remaining? We dined at the Outback nearby.

I elected to strike for home next morning as I was fatigued and having trouble holding a reasonable road speed. We took back roads to Interstate 77, then headed north on VA 221. Bad move since it was windy and hilly and slowed our progress. We bailed off at VA 8 to Christiansburg and put in at Days Inn. Cheap night!

Frank and I had dinner, then we spied an old 58 Chevy convertible at

the gas pumps. Frank sped off in its direction. I followed somewhat more slowly. Around behind comes an Explorer, a lead-foot Lizzie at the controls. Bang! Bump! she drilled me from behind. I was shaken, not stirred. Out comes Ms. Lead-Foot and she says in a little voice sweetly, "Are you hurt?" Uh, lessee, I replied smarting, while checking for broken bones. The Hand of The Almighty and His Angels protected this tough old Italian, however.

I elected to press on fearing a long stay in hostile hoot and holler country. So I dragged these beat-up bones back to Southern Maryland, arriving around 14:00 Sunday. I was very glad to be home.

Red "Pokey" Sciarra

PS: My surgeon says no harm, no foul to my artificial knee and he gave me one year to next visit. Huzzah!! and Hoorah!

From the Crabdicator:

Once again, the luck of the Irish coupled with the Hand of the Almighty has saved our favorite Italo-Irish raconteur from irreparable harm at the hands of a cell-phone-talking, SUV-driving, careless motorist. I know I speak for all the CRABS when I say how grateful we are Red has been singled out by the Leprechauns and the Almighty for divine protection, because goodness knows he needs it. Keep riding, Redhead. 🍀

Photo of the month

This month's submission is from fellow bicycle race dude Shawn Downing, a man to whom I trusted my hide when riding close formation at the races in Altoona. He is a photo moto nonpareil on his Triumph. Here's another triumph of artistic ability. Gotta love the subject matter.



And another one whose source I forget, titled "Gas Prices:"

