



The Crab Pot

*The overt publication of the mid-Atlantic's
most covert moto club*

JULY 2007

The Motorcycle Club Newsletter of Record

DRIVEL FROM THE CRABDicator

Another Southern Maryland summer: 99 degrees with humidity the same, raising the heat index to levels that inspire perspiration and hibernation. On today's ride, I felt as if I was facing a giant hair dryer. I have my own "Air Quality Index" to supplant the colors the weathermen use (red and orange are popular lately). My AQI has to do with how much of the air I can SEE and today it was WTFM (way too ___ much).

Still, the combination of the mesh Joe Rocket Phoenix (one of the finest inventions ever) and the airflow over the naked SV-650 made things bearable

on my commute. Even the vents on the helmet seemed to work especially well (but the HJC CLMAX has always been a leaky helmet anyway).

Why on the SV-650? Well, other than the fact that I ride it WAY too little, it also has to do with the fact that the R1150RS is in the shop again for blown exhaust valves (that's unofficial, as the diagnosis is pending clearance of a maintenance backlog at the dealer). I can tell you, however, having experienced one before, it's the same thing, only worse.

I was passing a truck on US-220 outside Altoona, PA when I felt a significant power loss. The machine wouldn't run below 2,000 RPM and wouldn't pull below 4,000, but it limped me into my friend Stefan's house where it was strapped to a trailer for the rest of the trip. I guess I should be thankful that it got me there on one cylinder, but I'm pissed that I'm having the second valve failure in 14,000 miles. We'll see how it goes, but two failures in 50,000 miles is a bit much for a "premium" machine in my view. More later. Thanks to Stefan and Janet Yencha and Betsy for the rescue!! 🏍️

The June Issue

I got some feedback on the crazy sportbiker stuff from the

June issue. One fella is an MSF instructor who is going to use it to open the eyes of some of the folks in his class. He has overheard some of his students talking about the behavior described in the article and he wants to illustrate the negative image their behavior inspires. I wish him luck and hope it helps. 🏍️

Crabs events

The aforementioned heat is keeping a lid on CRABS events until it breaks. We'll have a ride to eat in September sometime, I swear. Stay tuned for details. 🏍️

Places to get good tucker

In our constant quest to find good places to eat that are not cookie-cutter chains, I have stumbled across a couple.

The first is the Barbara Friche Candystick Restaurant on old US 40 West of Frederick, MD. We had lunch at the counter (a subject you may see in *Backroads* – shameless plug). The club sandwich was excellent and the pies looked great, although we didn't partake. Barbara Friche is a local heroine according to the placemat: she supposedly waved a Union flag out the window of her house when Stonewall marched the Brigade

through Frederick. I'm sure General Jackson was impressed by her pluck.

The second place is right on the main street of Hancock, MD. Weaver's restaurant is another place with a counter, although Stefan and Janet and I opted for a booth. Once again, the pies are excellent. I prefer Weaver's to the Lockhouse, the Park and Dine, and the Triangle (all in that narrow squirt of Maryland called Hancock). 🏍️

Shameless self promotion

The October issue of *Wild Wonderful West Virginia* will feature a motorcycle touring article with a familiar byline, accompanied by a sidebar from the motorcycling Governor, Joe Manchin. *WWWV* is the monthly tourism promotional magazine put out by the state's Department of Natural Resources. 🏍️

KEEP YER SHIRT ON!!

And sweatshirts, and stickers, and buttons, and stuff with Jen Seidel's brilliant CRABS logo aboard, all available at www.cafepress.com/chesriders. Get yours today! 🏍️

why july's issue is late

And June's for that matter. Most of you know one of my pursuits is bicycling and motor refereeing races in particular.

From 5-17 July, I was refereeing the US National Championships at the ski resort in Seven Springs, PA.

They were some long days as USA Cycling tried to pack as many events into this "Cycling Festival" as possible. The time trials had over 600 participants, for example, so one-minute intervals required over ten hours of starts to complete the field. We did two of those days.

The road races were on challenging, climbing courses around Seven Springs, featuring over 6,000 feet of climbing for some races. There were many stories, but one of my favorites was former mountain bike World Champion (and legend) Ned Overend placing in the top 15 of the men's Elite/Under-23 combined race... at 52 years of age. He's a mutant.

The other old guys impressed as well, with Franz Hammer and Francois Maertens finishing a grueling 60-64/65-69 field together many minutes ahead of their competition, chatting casually as they went up the final climb to claim a stars and stripes jersey apiece (each in his own age group).

There were heartbreaking stories as well. In the men's Junior 17-18 race, 28 riders

went down just 3 miles into the race. Thankfully, most were just skinned up, but a couple left via helicopter (although I believe all are now OK). The winner of that race, Ben King of Charlottesville, VA, was so far ahead at the end that he wasn't even in the same zip code as the field.

I think the most heartbreaking things I saw were in the female junior fields, where some competitors crossed the line so crestfallen and fatigued that they simply laid down in tears on the road. One girl was so inconsolable that she would not speak and it took threats from the EMT's to start an IV and take her to the hospital to make her respond. I remember one girl standing alone in the gravel parking lot at the top of the finish climb, weeping and with no parent there to console her. She was finally joined by her mother.

It was two weeks of hard work with lots of drama and pressure, but it was rewarding. If you have a chance to go to Seven Springs, do so. It looks like a neat place for winter or summer fun. 🚲

Tour de toona

What July would be complete without an annual pilgrimage to the Tour de Toona pro/am bicycle races in Altoona, PA?

Just to deplete my remaining vacation, I refereed the pro men's race at Altoona, starting just five days after the Seven Springs affair. The Tour de Toona is a long-running stage race now in its 21st year. To me, it's a family reunion with the staff and the other motos.

This year featured a new wrinkle: the Johnstown circuit race was replaced by a race between two facilities of a major sponsor! The only problem is that the major sponsor was... Waste Management. So, what was once a scenic tour around historic Johnstown, PA turned into the "Tour de Dump" point-to-point race. To cap off the day, it rained so the finish not only had the ambiance of a dump, but it was wet as well. At some point during the 1.5-hour wet transit back to the hotel, I fried my radio too.

The rest of the week was pretty uneventful. My highlights included stuffing myself in the back of a Mini Cooper to monitor the Jittery Joe's squad during the team time trial (a new feature of the first day that I hope will die a quick death). I'm sorry, Jim Patton, but the Mini is not meant for rear seat passengers! It took 5 minutes to get out of the thing.

Then there was the train: on Saturday I was Moto 2 (ahead of the field) for the Men's pro race and we were on our way to the Blue Knob climb. There was a breakaway about a minute off the front and the field wasn't really chasing too hard. Healthnet had the yellow jersey in tow at the front of the field when we reached a railroad crossing. Right as I got there, the lights turned red and I heard a big, loud air horn. Ruh Roh Rorge! Fifty meters behind me were about 150 cyclists. Fortunately, they got stopped and the train was short, so the break only gained an extra minute and a half before they were under way again. As usual, the field caught the break by the Blue Knob climb.

The rest of the race was uneventful until the exhaust valve let go on the way home. Then it got interesting again, but not very. Aggravating, actually. A big shout out to the people at ComPros of Altoona for sucking the water out of my radio and jumpering the blown fuse until they could get another: well done. 🚲

Photos of the month

Supplied by Bill Elfring from Philadelphia, #1 is Steve Stone and I preparing to referee the Crash 3 race at Martinsburg (note the R-A-M cup holder/koozy on the RT) and #2 is before the women's Cat 4 race in Altoona (happy that it's almost over). Next month: less about me.

