

## **14<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MMOC RIDE RECAP or HOW WE CONQUERED CRATER LAKE**

How do you define “gratification”? I would submit it is the pleasure of seeing an endeavor 14 months in planning come to fruition, incident and friction free, with accolades spewing forth from participants young and old alike, both in tenure and age. Others, like Paul Salerno or perhaps Bob Holland might construe that word to mean having an inflatable blow-up doll strapped in back of you on your motor or passing a flock of grazing sheep on a sinewy country road and hearing your name called out by the cutest ewe. While I could expound on that for years to come, I feel it’s a subject best left for a triple X tome.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual MMOC ride is now history and what a fantastic journey. We began in Anderson, California, July 9<sup>th</sup>, a Monday that ushered in a cooling trend to the Mount Shasta region, lowering temps to “only” 90 from the previous week’s 100+! As we inundated the hotel clerk en masse (she possessing an IQ similar to the thermometer reading outside), we were informed the pool was closed due to unforeseen health issues. Threatening to leave en masse as quickly as we arrived and suggesting that perhaps the manager contact someone to pass their magic sanitizer wand over the bewitching cool waters worked. After 2 hours of parking lot cocktails, a formal greeting by motor cops from Anderson and Redding, a welcome by members of Blue Knights California Chapter III, and obvious scurrying about poolside by a pool cleaning technician with test kits and enough chemicals to counteract Chernobyl, we went swimming. “Just don’t drink the water” he bellowed as he ran out the gate and jumped into his hooptey with blacked out windows and no license plates.

Dinner at the Mexican restaurant next door was great. Margaritas with salsa and chips and authentic organic gastronomical cuisine prepared us for early to bed, early to rise, and the beginning of our 900-mile trek over the next 4 days.

Tuesday morning dawned crisp and clear, and at our 0745 riders meeting (as per our norm) we discussed MMOC guidelines, safety issues and the route for the day. Thanks to the Anderson PD, we were prepared for a major detour on SR 44 that had us traveling on secondary roads from our hotel through beautiful farm land and the heart of America, far removed from the hustle and bustle of super-slab. Al Gore may protest, but as a true gear head who loves the smell of a “clean” running internal combustion engine, be it gasoline, alcohol or nitro-methane, the smell of grazing cattle and methane gas in a green pasture still symbolizes AMERICA to this rider. One hundred forty miles of 2 lane black top through lush Lassen and Shasta-Trinity National Forests delivered us back to IS 5 and our 90-mile jaunt into Medford, Oregon and our lodging.

The U. S. Bureau of Weather Guestimators had predicted evening thunder boomers throughout south central Oregon for several days to come, and as the sun dipped behind the Siskiyou Forest range of mountains visible from our Medford accommodations, the temperature *rose* to 100 degrees and 100 % humidity. There were but two choices for relief; an air conditioned room or the cool waters of the pool. Many of us chose the later until the heavens opened up followed shortly thereafter by thunder and lightening. It’s interesting to note we were voluntarily flying out of the pool as fast as staff was coming to evict us ‘cause the strikes were getting too close for comfort!

Dry pavement and wet bikes greeted us Wednesday morning and thankfully the temperature fell to 70 degrees with low humidity; in other words, perfect for our 90-mile trek to Crater Lake. Side stands up at 8:00 AM and a 5-minute detour on the outskirts of town (because I can't read a GPS unit worth a damn!) finally got our 25 bikes and one chase vehicle procession back on course. Two hours later we were standing atop the Discovery Point overlook at Crater Lake, some of us taking in the grandeur of the view. Others were whining because we didn't stop at the Visitor Center for souvenirs, sooooo we made a u-turn and invaded that overpriced arm of the Federal Government. While beauty is in the beholder's eye, I still maintain that Crater Lake and Yosemite have no equal in the Continental U.S. They are both majestic and truly awe inspiring, and when you consider that this lake is but a body of water *2,000 feet deep, 6 miles across* and formed by a volcanic eruption 7,700 years ago at Mount Mazama in an explosion that was *200 times more* powerful than Mt. St. Helens in 1980.....well, you get the picture, and particularly if you've been to Mt. St. Helens. Having worked Motors and ingested the fallout of the Washington explosion *two states distant*, I still cannot comprehend the power and magnitude Mother Nature can dish out!

Diamond Lake, 15 miles outside the North Entrance Station to the Park offered an excellent lunch stop and photo opportunity at their quaint lodge. Good food, service and a grassy knoll to relax on before we attacked Oregon 138 which parallels the Umpqua River through the Willamette National Forest into Roseburg, and our evening's lodging. Oregon 138 is designated a Scenic Byway; read that as 80 miles of pure motorcycling nirvana. Excellent pavement, low and high speed constant radii on-camber turns, and light traffic. I've ridden this road at least 10 times, in both directions, on all sorts of machines from solo crotch rocket to two-up touring Winnebago and the consensus of co-participants on those ventures echo mine: "it doesn't get any better than this". If you're an avid motorcyclist, you have to experience the road and scenery for yourself!

And speaking of *fast* forward, as we arrived at our hotel in Roseburg, we were greeted with the recurring theme...."the pool is out of order due to health department concerns".....Allow me to introduce myself and explain we don't care about the pool police. You want our business, clean the freak'n pool, have it available to us within an hour, or we're GONE!" There was no language barrier and we were all on the same page after that declaration! And swim we did. Hours later, thunder boomers set in and in lieu of going off in different directions, MMOC purchased pizzas for all while we dined al fresco under the first floor canopy.

Thursday promised to be our longest day on the road, approximately 270 miles of back roads pasture land, the Oregon coast and serpentine highway following the cascading Smith River, as we make our way back inland to Grants Pass. Three spectacular and very different topographies awaited us. Oregon 42 and 42S smell like wet grass and grazing cattle, sheep and horses. It's a beautiful region, aromatic with verdant rolling pastures and more than 80 miles of NO traffic. Arriving in Bandon on the coast, most are ready to don warmer clothes, fuel up and stretch. Typically overcast at 10 AM, we have clam chowder and other sea food delights that beckon us one hour south to the wharf at Gold Beach. Food is good, company and conversation great but the road is why we're on this venture. Forty-five minutes removed from fish stew and other seafarer delights, we're back in California and approaching Ca 197 which cuts across to US 199 and Grants Pass. More importantly, US 199 delivers us to the periphery of the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State

Park. The oldest, largest and most dense growth of Coastal Redwoods in the nation, the sun cannot peek through the canopies of these towering giants for miles on end. As we motor east and climb in elevation, we're ferried through several national forests and at the California-Oregon border, the mile long Collier Tunnel. Like little kids, we can't resist the temptation of honking our horns en masse, perhaps to drown out the roar of Harleys. One hour later we approached the outskirts of Grants Pass and even our GPS units couldn't agree on a route to the hotel. Flip a coin and laugh about it, because we all got there, albeit from four different directions, simultaneously! 90-degree temps made the pool very inviting and our impromptu daily end-of-ride celebration carried on for several hours as war stories and lies flowed like the Colorado River. Adjacent to our hotel, a fantastic family-owned restaurant served up home cooked meals to everyone's delight. A quick night cap, a quiet conversation and most were ready for a good night's rest.

Back to California Friday morning, our final night's lodging and the reality that Saturday morning would usher in the close to our ride. We split into two groups bound for Redding, one via the Interstate and the other detouring off at Ca 3 to Ca 299. It's interesting to note that while the scenic, secondary road detour added 60 plus miles to the route, we all arrived at the hotel simultaneously! Hmmmmm. Redding was in the mid 90's, it was mid afternoon and time to go poolside and recap our 5-day adventure over libations. As I said in my opening paragraph, gratification is indeed a wonderful term of endearment and this group of riders and participants made our 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Ride a fantastic and fun-filled event. Twenty five riders, 11 each on Hondas and Harleys, 2 on BMWs and one Yamaha, conveying 34 people from FIVE states is a cornucopia of like minded friends. And, let's not forget Mary Ann Mann who provided the chase vehicle this year, sweeping the rear of the pack daily, keeping us hydrated with more than 150 bottles of chilled water and Gatorade at rest stops, and in general spending countless hours tending to our needs and palates at evening pool parties.

Who else made this endeavor so successful? Representing San Jose PD, Jerry and Robbie Albericci, Paul Salerno, Dave Stengel and Charlotte Matteomi, John Kensit and Rich Bailey. San Francisco PD brought forth Rene (the Perve) LaPrevotte and his better half Susan Johnson and the inimitable Doug Foss. From Oakland PD, Cliff and Jeff Heanes, Doug and Kathy Wayne (he being a Motor Sgt par excellence, she, a Captain with the CHP!), Larry and LaRene Hodson, Bob Holland and yours truly His Own Self and my hard working wife Rhoda. Mark Murray (past President of MMOC and sitting Director) represented San Leandro PD, Chuck Nicolls from Modesto PD, Bob Glover Alameda PD and Mike and Jeanie Rores of the Alameda County Sheriffs Office. LA PD was represented by Bob and Vi Hossfeld, Ron Bryan, Gary Smith and the two hard riding sons of CK Williams, Buzzy and Ken. This is the first year we had representation from the California Highway Patrol, the aforementioned Kathy Wayne, Bill Loveless, retired out of the Sacramento office, and E.Z. and Michele Blakemore from the Oakland office. Understand that if we had a long distance attendance award to present at our impromptu poolside ceremonies, Gary Smith from Vancouver, Washington, and Bob Hossfeld from Surprise, Arizona, would be front runners. However, neither could hold a candle to the Blakemores who ventured from their retirement home in Howard, OHIO on their Harley! That's dedication.

Enough backslapping and verbiage. It's time to reward our palates and stomachs at Chevy's Mexican Restaurant 3 Looooong blocks distant. Thanks to Mary Ann and

Chuck Nicolls' wife Phyllis, some of us that were "under the weather" were ferried to this gastronomic delight. Friday night in Redding, all the locals forget about four wheeling in the boonies, Section 8 housing, the golf course and other geriatric exercises and head to the many fantastic restaurants in the city. Chevy's is no exception, and thanks to MMOC members and city residents Bob and Yvonne Ayres (he, a bike nut from OPD) and Ed and Sue Cardoza ( of Milpitas PD Traffic Division fame), who could not attend the ride with us due to prior commitments, had the entire outer deck reserved for our loud, boisterous, motley group. As the "locals" looked and listened in horror, we lied, embellished and in general offended anything and everyone within ear shot! What goes good with great Mexican cuisine other than cervesa and margaritas? NOTHING, therefore, mas refreshments por favor!

As the sun dipped over the horizon and I whipped out my credit card to buy a final round of 8 *pitchers* of margaritas for the assembled, Rhoda pinched my ear, pulled me close and whispered, "It's time to say good night, dear!"

'Nite all, and thanks for one hell of a ride!

I remain, Dennis M. Brown His Own Self, Touring Executive Ride Director