



Concours Owners Group Southeast Area News



Volume 04, Issue 1

'Sport Touring At Its Finest'

February, 2004

2004 SECOG

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Help Wanted:

Need AADs for TN and MS (See
back page) and Ride leaders.
Contact your AAD

Daytona BikeWeek Activities March 5-7

The Florida Riders of the Concours Owners Group welcome our fellow COG members, and Concours riders, to the great state of Florida. Can you say sunshine? We're planning some good riding and eating for all of you at this "Mother of all bike rallies". There is way too much to see and do in a week, so come on down as early as you can make it and enjoy our weather and great roads. For the music lovers among us, the following are some of the concerts that I've heard are going on; Styx, Lynard Skynard, Night Ranger, Foghat and George Thorogood to name a few. On with the show - Page 2.

Camping and Activity Information
on Page 2

Don't miss the 'Escape to the Conc Republic Ride, or, The Florida COGers find Nemo' as reported by Bruce Barge on pages 5-7.

Southeast Heat

By Larry Buck, AD



This is a new feature of our Southeast Newsletter that I hope to provide you with timely information about our Group that I hope you will find useful. This month I'd like to offer you some ideas to grow our membership that I hope you will consider doing in your home area. Every year we lose some members because they sell their bikes, forget to join, or feel they don't get enough out of the Group. We need to replace them with new members to keep our Group viable and growing. The Factory does little to support our Group, so it's up to us to get the word around.

Continued on Page 3

(BikeWeek Continued from Page 1)

BikeWeek Camping:

WHERE: HOLIDAY TRAVEL PARK- DAYTONA, FLORIDA

WHEN: FEBRUARY 27- MARCH 7 2004

DIRECTIONS: FROM I-95 NORTH OR SOUTH, USE EXIT 278 (OLD EXIT #90), PARK IS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE INTERSTATE
CAMPING FEES: \$16.00/DAY FOR EVENT STAY, \$20.00/DAY SHORT TERM

We are sharing this exclusive camping area with the BMW Group. The management likes the way our bikes (don't) sound. Clean, quiet, grassy and safe areas to camp at this event are hard to come by.

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

FRIDAY MORNING, MARCH 5TH AT 9:00 A.M.

Join us for the **annual BIKEWEEK COG**

breakfast. Host Paul Heydemann says "Step right up & enjoy a Bikeweek breakfast with your COG mates. We've found a convenient place that serves great grub and plenty of it. Join us

9:00 am Friday March 5th, 2004 at Biscuits 'n' Gravy & More 3500 Nova Rd, Port range, FL 32129 Phone: (386) 304-9433

This is located 10 min. SE of the Speedway. From the N on I-95,

exit SR400/Beville Rd, go E, and turn S on Nova Rd.

From the S on I-95, exit SR421/Dunlawton Ave, go E, and turn N on Nova Rd. The restaurant is in a small shopping center (strip mall) on the W side of the street. Hosted by Paulie, Mijami Floriduh, '01 Concours, COG #4561, FL Co-AAD, paul.heydemann@netzero.net

After Breakfast, we'll take a ride on the 'Loop', a scenic ride through Tomoka Park that ends back on A1A, North of the heavy traffic, and a ride to St. Augustine where the tour will check out a light house, old Navy port and some of the downtown old architecture.

This road tour will be hosted by Al Norcross, North Florida ADD ironbuttal@wmconnect.com

Saturday, March 6th 9:30

A.M.: Meet at the Kawasaki Tent for the **Daytona 200 by Arai**. (Note Change: Usually the 200 is held on Sunday.) For schedule, goto <http://www.daytonaintlspeedway.com/>

Saturday, March 6TH: After a day of racing, we'll all go to supper at **Aunt Catfishes**.

Meet at the restaurant at 6:00 p.m. We will have a private room and chow down. **DIRECTIONS:** On the West Side of the Port Orange Bridge, 4009 Halifax Dr., Port Orange, phone 386-767-4768. More info at www.discoverdaytona.com/mainland/restaurants/auntcatfish/auntcatfish.htm

MORE BIKEWEEK INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT: <http://www.officialbikeweek.com>
AL NORCROSS, North Florida, Assistant Area Director, COG 5516, IBA 9579
HOME: 352/860-1014
CELL: 352/422-5499
EMAIL: ironbuttal@wmconnect.com

Upcoming events:

Feb '04 FL COG monthly RTE C'mon check out some down-home FL goodies & fun at the annual LaBelle Swamp Cabbage Festival. I've never made this festival but have heard good things about it. LaBelle is located between Lake Okeechobee & Ft Meyers. When: Saturday February 28th, 2004.

Destination: the Shell? gas station on SR80, just E of where SR29 doglegs N. ETA will be 10am, when a parade is scheduled. We'll move to a good spot to take in the festival, a few blocks N.

I'll be leaving from the SE at 7:45am from Dade Corners, 17696 SW 8 St Miami, FL 33194, 305-553-6203. This is on the SE corner of US41 (Tamiami Trail) & SR997 (Krome Ave/SW 177 Ave). Smurf the following for more infos...

<http://members.aol.com/browne/scf.html>

<http://www.floridalegion.org/calendar/details/swamp.htm>

<http://hendrycounty.org/cityoflabelle/local.html>

<http://members.aol.com/kq4ym/scf2.html>

Hosted by Paulie, Mijami Floriduh, '01 Concours, COG #4561, FL Co-AAD, paul.heydemann@netzero.net

Southeast Heat cont'd from Page 1.

Got a minute?

It is generally conceded that the Concours Owners Group is one of the best owners groups going. I believe there are several reasons for this: a great motorcycle, for sure, with a long production run; many owners that like to tinker with them; owners that actually go somewhere on their motorcycle; some of the best rallies extant; but mainly, we have some of the nicest people I've had the pleasure of knowing. Honda used to say "You meet the nicest people on a Honda." That may be true, but they don't come any better than the people I've met on the Concours. We have truly **GREAT** members and riders!

Many motorcycle riders do not know that our Group is open to ALL riders and ALL motorcycle brands. If you have some good friends that you usually ride with, why not invite them to one of your local COG activities and introduce them to our members.....we have a lot in common. They might just like it.

Another suggestion I'd like you to consider, is to carry a few COG membership applications in your saddlebag. The form is easily downloaded and printed from our National webpage (www.concours.org).

If you see a new or used Concours at a dealer in your area, take a minute to ask the Sales Manager if you could put the form in the saddlebag. I've never been turned down yet.

See a Concours at the restaurant your stopping at or in a shopping center parking lot? Take a moment to stick a

membership application under the tank bra or behind the windshield. You would be surprised at how many owners do not have any idea about our Group and it's benefits.

See you next month. Ride far.....

Larry Buck, SE-AD

CHECK OUT YOUR SPRINGS (RIDE)

On March 26th, the COG Florida Riders will host a ride in and around the Ocala National Forges. This will be a three day formate, March 26-28, that will include a circumnavigation of the O.N. F. to the tune of 175 miles, trips to the many first Magnatuide Springs that are in the area and make it a really unique place to visit and some coll and different places to eat. Some other activities that we can do are swimming in the 72 degree springs, snorkeling the waters, and canoe trips on area rivers that start their flow from the springs. I'm putting the finishing touches on this trip, not the least of which is the camping place. But there is a ton of good places to stay, so its just getting the best spot nailed down by me...which will happen soon.

I wanted to give everybody a 'heads up' so you can mark your new 2004 calendar and plan on this one. You're in for a treat when we ride this one. I promise.

AL NORCROSS COG AAD
NORTH FLORIDA

"Over the Pond" trying it again..

"Over the Pond III": We're not thru yet!! Making a motorcycle trip to another country is something that many people in the club dream about. Unfortunately, most find it too expensive, and far too difficult to arrange. Eventually most are forced to drop the idea. But not all. Because of the graciousness of this club, Three "Travelers" have lived the dream and have gone "Over the Pond"...

We decided in "The Beginning" that he'd like to try to do "Over the Pond" each year. With a little help from his "noble team of slave labor" heis trying again. We plan to send a COGger (or two) to Europe for the 3rd GTR-Rally. It can happen!

We need your help with a few insignificant little things.... Pledges, Nominations, Voting, Pledges, Bikes, Housing, Pledges, Insurance, Tasty Delicacies, Pledges, some COG friends, and Pledges... (The pledge and collection period are scheduled to end on June 15th)

So, here's the question. Will you help us do "Over the Pond" again???

If you can help, please contact us...

For Nominations/Votes/Pledges/Assistance
"GÖRTZ HANS-OVE, COG # 3465, "
<hans-ove.gortz@telia.com>
"Ted Adcock, COG #4154"
<ted@concours.org>
"Spencer Farrow, COG # 2014"
<Spencer.Farrow@veritas.com>
"COGers make things happen"

Ride safe,

Ted Adcock, Houston, TX, for the Over the Pond' project

The 2004 Atlanta International Motorcycle Show

By Reggie Chestnutt,
Atlanta Area AAD

The Atlanta International Motorcycle Show was one to remember. The weather was in the mid 30's, just right to start the short ride to the show. In 2003, when I left home in the cage it was in the 20's. As always, my riding buddy, James Freeman and I made the 9-mile trip to the Cobb Galleria.

We met at Folks a local restaurant near I-75 and Hwy 5 in Marietta. It was a quick trip about 10 minutes on interstate 75. We were very fortunate to get premium parking in the passenger drop off circle area in front of the Galleria. Every year, I look forward to seeing what each manufacturer has pulled from under their shirt. The parking lots were nearly full with 4 wheelers and not a lot of bikes. After parking and taking off our riding gear we headed inside building and up the escalators. A lot of motorcycle lovers waiting for the show to open at 10:00. The lines were extremely long and this was my first time having to wait in a long line to get inside the show. Boy do I miss Good Time Owners Club invitation. After about 15 minutes we purchased our tickets and headed in the show and one of the first people we see is John Carver and his son John, Jr.

A pleasant surprise!

This year the Kawasaki booth was right inside the main entrance, good local. As always this year's line looks party much the same. The 2004 color of the Concours ready makes everyone wonder if the Connie in black or dark blue, but in any case a pretty color. After viewing several other bikes we started seeing more old friends from the Atlanta area, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Georgia and Alabama. I reminded everyone about lunch at Jock's and Jill's at 12:30pm. We would meet outside the main entrance at about 12:15pm.

We spent about another 1 hour looking at bikes and accessories before heading to lunch. Jocks and Jill's had everything set-up and we filled up the section. It was a good showing. Everyone enjoyed their food and conversation before returning to the show.

Thanks to everyone who made the trip to show and I hope everyone enjoyed themselves.

The Un-Official Listing of Rides or Events.

Courtesy of John Carver, GA

- 2/27 - 3/7 Bike Week, Daytona, Fl
- 2/28 AMA SuperCross, Georgia Dome, Atlanta, GA
- 3/6 - 7 Grand National Cross Country, Washington, GA
- 3/14 AMA National Enduro Series, Greensboro, GA
- 3/27 - 29 Big Bend Twisties, Study Butte, Tx
- 4/9 T.W.O. Opens
- 4/16 - 18 Hill Country Wildflower Ride, Hunt, Tx
- 4/30 - 5/2 BMW Ga Mtn Rally,

- Bald Mtn. Pk, Hiawasse, GA
- 6/7 - 12 Americade, Lake George, NY
- 6/23 - 26 Honda Hoot, Knoxville, Tn.
- 7/1 - 4 Youth and Womens Trials, Sequatchie, Tn.
- 7/13-17 **Concours Floodcity National, Johnstown, Pa.**
- 9/3 - 5 AMA Superbike Races, Road Atlanta, Braselton, GA
- 9/10 - 12 **Run With The Wolf, Suches, GA**
- 10/16 End of Season Fish Fry, Blue Ridge M C, Cruso, NC
- 10/16 - 19 BiketoberFest, Daytona Beach, FL

John Carver is seeking input from GA COGers to organize 2004 Rides.
Contact John [john@concours.org]

Outgoing TN AAD, Tony Chinn, says 'Thanks' to TN COGers

I want to thank the Tennessee COG members for participating in the events and giving us two good years. We especially had good attendance at the rides. Also, I want to thank those who lead rides for us. That was extremely helpful since I had only lived in Middle TN for about 8 months when I became AAD and didn't know where many of the fun roads were yet. It has been fun. Now I'm looking forward to being a regular participant!

Thanks,
Tony

Editor Note: **Thank YOU! Tony for your service to TN COGdom. We appreciate YOU!**

Escape to the Conc Republic Ride, or, The Florida COGers find Nemo.

By Bruce Barge

I must confess that when this ride was first announced, I waffled on whether to go or not. I've done "the Keys thang", several times. If you aren't fishing, diving and/or drinking, the Keys can get boring pretty quickly. The ride there would be almost 500 miles, a portion of it being along the Ft. Lauderdale/Mijami corridor which I consider to be riding through the depths of hell itself. Kind of mumbling these objections to Al Norcross, Fla. co-AAD, he reaches over, grabs my ear and twists it around a couple times. "OK!OK!OK! Lemme go, I'll go already!" The Pied Piper of Inverness can have a certain persuasiveness about him. The ride was scheduled for the last weekend in January, Super Bowl weekend, I would take Friday off and ride down with Al and some of his buddies. A quick glance at the Weather Channel Wednesday night showed about a 30% chance of rain and knowing what weather differences can exist along half the length of the state, I made sure to pack my Widder vest and waterproof Motoport jacket liner. This would prove later to be one of the smartest moves I've made so far this year.

I pulled into the parking lot at Denny's in Wildwood, just off I-75, around 8:30 Friday morning to find only 2 other bikes there, Al's Connie and his riding partner Jo's Seca II. Apparently 2 other of Al's friends had gotten a later look at the weather forecast than I had and had waved the ride off. Al informed me that the forecast has worsened and is calling for rain both Friday and Saturday in the South Florida area. This really didn't concern me much as I'm convinced that most forecasts these days tend to err on the safe side and things are not usually as bad as predicted. Wanna guess who was right this time? In an effort to avoid the congestion and construction of Mousetown (Orlando) and the paved abortion that is the Mijami/Dade area, I'd mapped out an alternate route taking us down the Western coast of the state and across on US 41 through the bowels of the Everglades. I'd flown over the length of the Glades a few years ago on my first long solo cross-country flight and wanted to check it out from a little closer than 3000' feet up. Before we all finished our coffee and started to suit up, I thought we should decide on a cruise speed. Jo assured Al and I that she'd have no problem maintaining whatever speed we decided on and it was agreed to keep things just under 80.

The next three hours were pretty much an uneventful drone and moan on I-75 South down through Tampa, Sarasota, and Fort Myers to a gas/refreshment stop and our turn East at Naples. During the first 30 minutes or so of the ride down, I'd made a couple mirror checks to see how Jo was doing only to find her a very comfortable butt close distance behind me. This would be the first of many hints during the weekend that she'd be just "one of the guys", ready and able to handle whatever came our way. US41 East across the state was an interesting ride, 2 lane, straight as an arrow running through The Big Cypress National Preserve, the heart of the Florida Everglades and the Miccosukee Indian reservation. This corridor is a paradise for nature lovers with numerous swamp boat and buggy excursions being available along the way. It also struck me as a deadly dangerous roadway. Several times, on the long straights, approaching passing cars got close enough for me to flick them several times with my Hellas and begin to scout appropriate offroad escape options. The fact the the 60 mph speed limit dipped to 45 mph at night told me that with all the wildlife out there, nighttime could turn the road into a killing field. Hit something big or go off the road out there at night and it would be awhile before anyone could ever get there to help, and chances would be good that something might drag you out into the swamps for dinner first. While I enjoyed the daytime ride, there is no way on God's green swampy earth I'd ride that road at night. After nearly a hundred miles, we pulled into a c-store before our final turn South to Florida City. With the poor attitudes of the store clerks and the guard inside the store, it was easy to tell we were on the Southern outskirts of Mijami, having just traded one form of wilderness for another.

It had rained steadily during our trek across the state and continued for our last 22 miles Southward. I never knew there was so much farmland out West of town, both sides of the road were either fields or packing houses. We pulled into a Chevron in Florida City to find out that our destination, the Everglades Hostel was just one block away. Thinking we'd save ourselves a later trip out in the pouring rain, Al and I each scored a cold sixer from the Chevron before heading the one block to the hostel. Not knowing the hostel's policy on alcohol, I left my sixer on the bike until we had checked in. This turned out not to be necessary as the hostel was explained to be an "obnoxious behavior" free zone, not an alcohol free zone. Phil and Pierre poked their heads out of the front door to welcome us and phoned the attendant to come and check us in. We paid for two nights (\$30-private room, \$15-dorm room bed per night) and were given our bed linens and towels before being taken on a tour of the facilities. In talking beforehand with Larry, I think all of us "hostel virgins" were a little apprehensive as to what we'd find. I was astounded as we made our tour, this place was COOL! It was a large turn of the 20th century house that had been converted to a hostel. Each of the dorm "bedrooms" had it's own bathroom and bunk beds sleeping no more than 6 people per room. There was a huge garden area out back where some tents were pitched and there were covered table areas for eating, and partying. There was a separate building with the kitchen facilities, computer room (free internet) and big screen tv room, the hostel even offered free long-distance phonecalls to anywhere in the US. There was even a communal refrigerator to keep our beverages cold in. Outside the kitchen under the overhand, was a big griddle we were told we could cook ourselves pancakes on 24/7 if we wished. I'm pretty sure us "hostel virgins" were not the only ones with some apprehension. I think we all tried to convince the nice attendant that we were not unruly, obnoxious, "bikers" with the same vehemence with which she tried to convince us that they weren't a bunch of reefer toking, leftover from the 60's, flower children. I'm pretty sure we were all successful in our "convincing". Interesting enough, the hostel residents actually ranged in age from the early 20's to near 70 and most seemed to be "enviro-enthusiasts" using the hostel as a "base camp" for explorations into the Everglades National Park. We adjourned to the "outdoor living room" for cold beers and conversation. Soon, I noticed Larry Buck had arrived and was being taken on his own private tour of the hostel. He had the same look of pleasant surprise on his face that had been on mine not too much earlier.

Al, Jo and I had ridden about 6 hours and hadn't eaten anything all day, I'm sure we weren't the only one's thinking about dinner. Phil had arrived earlier in the day and had good things to say about the Mexican restaurant across the street. Larry joined us from his tour and provided yet another surprise of this hostel. They served dinner to their "residents" for the COGly sum of \$3.00 and a few minutes of post-meal dishwashing efforts. At 7PM, an all-you-can-eat feast of enchiladas, black beans and rice, salad and bread pudding for desert was served. Afterwards, we were all so stuffed it was all we could do to waddle to the kitchen for our dishwashing duties.

'Sport Touring At Its Finest'

Phil kept repeating that he'd NEVER eat Mexican food again and I think the rest of us were filling out our applications to Jack Tollett's Texas Methane Producers Association. Gathered around the covered table, Phil gave us a briefing on and demonstrated a nifty new invention of his, a two piece lengthwise "bearing" that installs over the Connie shifter tang which he purports will make shifting much smoother. His enthusiasm was contagious as a few of us had him install his "Shiftsnik" on our bikes before the weekend ended. A few more beers each and one by one, we peeled off for bed to rest up for our action packed Saturday. A couple times during the night, I awoken to hear it raining outside, things are not looking good for a dry ride to Key West. Early the next morning, activity from the adjoined bath stirs me awake and I ask the resident walking out what time it was. "20 till 7" he replies, and I figure I'd better get a shower while the gettin' is good. I finish, step out into the the room and slip my watch on, glancing at it. Whaaa?...it's only 6AM. Ain't no tellin' what time zone the prior bather was living in. I get dressed and head next door for coffee, stopping along the way at my bike to snag my RatShack weather radio. Soon the rest of our merry band gathers around the radio, coffee in hand and listens to the soggy news. There's a stationary front sitting right on top of us that is not going anywhere until sometime Sunday. We all pretty much resign ourselves that this weekend is gonna turn into an on-bike SCUBA certification trip. There was still enough time before we had to meet Paulie at the Chevron for Larry, AL and I to have a little pancake making contest. Boy, did those warm, buttery, syrupy cakes really go well with that coffee. Before heading over to top off my tank, I took a few minutes to zip my waterproof jacket liner in and slip my Saran (Wrap) Quick Cover "condoms" over my Valentine and CB radio. Over at the Chevron, I ran into Paulie and "Pirate John" from the LDR list. Soon after the assigned departure time of 8, we were all gassed up and ready to roll.

The ride to Key West would be 125 miles over mostly 2 laned US1 with speed limits of 55 mph dipping to 45 mph as you enter each of the populated Keys (islands). Group riding in the Keys is difficult, complicated mainly by "mainlanders" failing to properly synchronize themselves to Keys Standard Time. Everything in the Keys happens very lackadaisically, in a purposeful non-hurried, whenever-we-get-around-to-it manner. Not knowing or adapting to this fact is likely to drive a visitor stark raving mad with frustration.

Synchronization to KST for me traditionally takes place ASAP after crossing the (Key) Largo bridge. The process is quite simple butt very effective. One simply pulls over to the side of the road and ceremoniously removes ones watch and places it in the glove compartment or in this case, a tank bag. This process helps greatly with the unrealistic expectation in the Keys of anything occurring in any timely manner. It is also suggested that the "reverse-synchronization" take place prior to crossing the Largo bridge when departing the Keys. Along the way, hurried cage drivers not properly synced to KST had broken up our riding group. Larry and I pulled over in Islamorada for a quick cup of coffee and to sync ourselves to KST, ahhhh., we felt Much Better Now being in the proper Keys frame of mind.

Larry and I had a good time chatting along the way on the CB, pointing out to each other our own various personal points of interest along the way. On Big Pine Key lives the major portion of the endangered species, the Key deer. These are a sub-species of the Virginia whitetail deer standing less than 36" tall and weighing less than 80 lbs, about the size of an Afghan hound and just about as stupid. They are found mainly on Big Pine and No Name Key and number less than 800 in total. On Big Pine, I found it interestig that for several miles, they had placed 10' high chain-link fencing immediately off the roadway to protect the few free roaming Key deer on the island. It's too bad the weather was so crappy, a group visit to the Key Deer Refuge on Big Pine would have made for an interesting side stop. At one point, Larry and I were menaced by a hurried maniac in a red Ford pick-up, a poor soul obviously NOT synced to KST. I had watched in my mirrors as this jerk had sped up, forced his way through traffic, and passed in obvious and dangerous no passing zones. He forced his way into hardly any space between Larry and I and then zoomed past Larry at his first chance. Larry and I had a good laugh a few miles later when we discovered that there is a Traffic God and today, he was driving a Florida Highway Patrol Camaro which which was lit up and pulled in behind Mr. I'm-Not-Going-Anywhere-For-Awhile red pick-up truck. I had to resist a very strong temptation to pull over and have a nice chat with the FHP trooper re; the antics of this moron that Larry and I had witnessed earlier that perhaps the trooper had missed. We finally arrived on Key West proper and began to make our way to the South end of the island. As we snaked our way through the narrow streets to the Half Shell Raw Bar I couldn't help butt notice that the stops lights were out. Hmmmm. Larry and I pulled into the parking lot just minutes behind the rest of the group as they were still peeling off their riding gear. Glancing up and the rolling black and grey sky, I suggested to Larry that we might want to put our folded riding gear on our bikes then cover them with our 1/2 covers. This proved later to be Really Good idea. Once seated inside we discovered that the power outage that had darkened the stoplights along the way had also effected the whole South end of the island, luckily, there were still many items available from the menu. I myself had the Conch chowder which was still warm since before the power outage while others feasted on dozens of oysters, clams, peel and eat shrimp, salads, and smoked fish. While fountain sodas were temporarily not flowing, trust me, there was plenty of cold beer and tea remaining to take care of our thirsts.

Paulie could not have known in advance what a wise idea it had been for him to choose a raw bar for us, as the lack of power there only limited menu selections instead of eliminating the whole menu. There was a great view from most all tables of the surrounding Lands End Marina and during a break in the showers I took a short stroll around the docks checking out the boats and chatting with their skippers. Upon my return to the table, Larry and AL, the two more avid boaters in our group were surprised to hear of the \$65 per night dockage fee for a 30' boat with no break in price for a week stay. Folks, Nothing comes cheap in Key West. After a couple hours eating and drinking and chatting, it was time to suit up and get ready to get ready to head back to Florida City. Of course, on par with the weekend so far, the rain really picked up as we mounted up and it was decided to abbreviate our sight seeing tour. At most of the Fla. COG'er rides so far, I've been the last one to finally get my riding clogs on, tunes ear plugs in, bike key located and be ready to roll, hence the term "pulling a 2ski". At Key West the term was at least temporarily renamed "pulling a Paulie" as we all sat there in the deluge ready to ride. We did manage to make it a few streets over to the Most Southern Point in the US monument where we coerced a stander by to take our group pic before Paulie led us on a circuitous scenic route along the oceans edge of the Island and Northward off the Key.

The ride back was pretty much uneventful except that the rain was much steadier and the wind had picked up considerably. Crossing the two lane 7 mile bridge just South of Marathon with it's lower guard rails, and wet roadway in a stiff breeze raised the pucker factor just a bit. Pulling over for a break in Marathon, I mentioned to the group, "well, if anyone had a bridge phobia, that would have just either cured you or killed you". The stationary front appeared to really be centered over the South mainland as the closer we got back to Florida City the harder it rained.

I was glad to be riding at the rear of the group when rounding a bend, a car driving in front of us ran through a large amount of standing water shooting a huge wave up into the air. As Larry and I dismounted in the pouring rain at the hostel, I chuckled and told him, "you know, I'd bother with putting my cover on the bike, but it's about as wet now as it can possibly get". The area right in front of the hostel door was flooded in about 6" of water with it flowing into the front door. Larry and I just grinned at each other when I said, "Boot Test!" and we waded right through it in our Oktars. This weekend was showing what a big difference it makes to be properly prepared for the conditions. In spite of the continuous downpour we were still having a great time as with proper riding gear, most of us were remarkably dry. My Motoport suit and Oxstar boots had worked fantastically and after riding all day in the rain, I was 100% dry as a bone. With their Saran Quick cover condoms", the electronics on my bike had not even skipped a beat.

Everyone took a few minutes in their rooms to peel off their riding gear before heading back to the awning "living room" in the back yard. It was near 6 PM and our groaning stomachs were relieved to hear that once again, the hostel would be serving dinner. We all ran and got our hand lettered cardboard signs to hang around our necks that read, "Florida COGers Will Wash Dishes For Food" and got into the chow line ready to put the severe hurtin' on some BBQ chicken, mashed potatoes, french bread and salad. After dinner, we had a few hours to attempt (successfully) to finish our remaining ample supply of beer before the end of our visit. We called it a kinda early night as Paulie had set a 7AM departure time from the Chevron for our group breakfast on South Beach in order to beat the possibly horrid Mijami traffic.

On Sunday morning, there was barely enough time for a quick cup of coffee from the hostel kitchen before we had to meet Paulie at the Chevron for our escort to the Front Porch Grill on South Mijami Beach for breakfast. Luckily there was just a light drizzle as we made our way towards downtown Mijami. Paulie had done an exquisite job of planning for this weekend but finally fate bit him right in his butt. Though he had checked and double-checked for traffic complications, he had been given some bad information and his routing led us all right into the bowels of the running of the 2004 Miami Tropical Marathon. We were stopped several times and made several detours to accommodate the runners, all 5000+ of them. If I had an intention of ever starting running again, there would be second thoughts after this, I saw several runners that looked like they were yards away from a face planting, concrete eating, heart attack. It damn sure didn't look like any kind of fun to me. Riding across the Rickenbacker Causeway into Miami Beach is always a thrill to me as it borders the cruise ship terminal and there's always a large number of the monstrous vessels docked and lined up only a couple hundred yards from the roadway. After a quick jog North along the beach we all pulled in and backed against the curb across the street from the cafe.

Once again, Paulie had excelled in his rally planning as this place had some great food and was definitely a BIG step up from the hostel in ambiance complete with the cutie, pretty boy South Beach waiter staff. The weather gods were not quite finished with us yet though, soon after sitting down under the outdoor awning, it began to pour cats, dogs, puppies and kittens. Even this final deluge was not able to drench any of the enthusiasm or fun for our group this weekend. It really was amazing how little negative effect the terrible weather had on our good time the whole trip through.

Everyone had pretty much gotten used to the fact that it was gonna rain and just didn't let it bother us, again, this being largely due to us all being properly attired for the conditions. I think all of us felt a little sorry for Jo though as the almost non-existent windshield on her Seca II didn't afford her near the weather protection of our larger bikes. Still, she was one hell of a trooper with not a single discouraging word from her being heard anywhere on the whole trip. I know everyone noticed this as several guys gave her a big hug and said they'd ride with her anywhere. Though the minutes of our get together were waning, the excitement was not. Lending truth to the saying, "All the nuts roll down to Florida", twice, Larry and Paulie had to run out into the street in the rain, hollering and waving their arms to stop moronic tourists from backing into our parked row of bikes as they attempted to squeeze their rental cars into the very tight parking spots. I know everyone one of our hearts skipped a beat both times, imagining the domino effect of falling bikes and busted plastic. Thanks guys, yall saved our butts.

Soon, it was time for us to suit up and head our respective ways home. Paulie was nice enough to escort us all out of South Beach and port Al, Jo and I towards our run Northward to Alligator Alley and our Eastward dash across the state. As I saw Larry give his signal to pull away from our group on his way North, he and I said our goodbyes to each other on our CB's. Larry and I make a pretty good team, it was good seeing him again and as always, I can't wait till our next visit together.

Just about 10 miles North of Mijami proper, Al, Jo and I made our Eastward turn and it was like a big light switch above flicked on. We made the turn right onto dry roads, and sunlit blue skies.

Stands to reason doesn't it?

{Authors postscript; Needless to say, it was too good to be true. While Al, Jo and I had warm temps and blue skies for over 300 miles on our ride home, after we separated, just 30 miles from MY house, it began to monsoon again. Special Thanks for this ride go out to Paul Heydemann, Fla. co-AAD for his great job in planning and escort duties. While a few of us were curious about the hostel idea, Paulie has shown us all an attractive, viable nationwide alternative to camping for about the same price. Thanks also to Al, Larry, Joe, Phil and Pierre for being such troopers and not letting the weather dampen the weekend. To the almost 100 remaining Fla. COG'ers, yall missed yet another great event, it's time yall pencil the NEXT Fla. COG ride into your schedules!}

Your Rover Reporter,
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Rally Referees Needed

If you ever wanted to help with a COG rally, but didn't want a large commitment -here's the perfect opportunity for you. COG is looking for a few volunteers to help with our 2004 AMA sanctioned rallies.

Each rally needs a referee, a person who can help with the sanctioning related aspects of a rally. The primary responsibilities: 1) help get all rally attendees to sign the insurance waiver; 2) complete an incident report in the event of an accident; 3) have fun.

There's no experience required, the AMA will teach you everything you need to know in a short workshop and the training is good for two years.

The commitment is minuscule, but the rewards are huge. COG only sanctions a few rallies each year (about one per region). Your help is only needed during the rally and should only take a few minutes each day. Once the rally is over, your job as the referee is done. It's a small but vital role and you'll become an integral part of this world-class organization.

For more information on how you can help, please contact Henry Cooper @ hjcooper@jps.net / 925-658-6406, or contact your local AD.

Don't wait (act now!), the workshops begin soon.

Thanks in advance, ride safe. Henry Cooper, Insurance Communications

WANTED ASSISTANT AREA DIRECTORS

I am looking for a few energetic, COG minded individuals, interested in leading like minded Concours owners in their area. No experience required as we will train you. If you have been looking for the ideal, high paying, full benefits package, position in a motorcycle related career, please do not reply. But if you can share some of your time to organize a few rider activities and lead your fellow Concours Owner's Group members while having the time of your life, I need to hear from you. Positions available in Tennessee, Northern Alabama, & Mississippi. Join the ride. Contact Larry Buck, SE-AD @888/835-0805 or email: lrbuck@aol.com