

## President's Column – February 2005

*Thanks to Chuck & Sue Hof*

Thanks to Chuck and Sue Hof for leading the club in 2004. We need the support of members like them willing to step up and take over the sometimes-thankless job of leading the club, and the behind-the-scenes effort that requires. Also, we're glad to hear Chuck is recuperating nicely from his recent surgery.

*May You Go on "Interesting" Rides*

Our first ride of the year went well, I thought. A few days prior, a dove showed up on our balcony with an olive leaf in its mouth, so I took it as a sign that the rains had actually ceased and the waters abated. Perhaps we could take a day ride without getting wet. La Honda was our destination, which I had decided on before realizing Tom Brazier had led a ride up the coast, more or less, the month before. Fearing that I might commit the unforgivable sin of leading folks over some of the same roads the very next month, I agonized over an alternate route. The problems were two-fold. First, how does one go about reaching La Honda the "back way," that is, without making extensive use of the roads through the SC mountains or Highway 1 while still composing an interesting route? Second, although I quite often willingly ride in the rain, the wetness was enough to dampen my desire to go out and scout a good route. So I was left with finding a way by maps only, and was loathe to choose any back roads since I couldn't be sure if they had been flooded or mudded over.

On Saturday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, it was *not* raining, but it was definitely damp and chilly. I made almost constant use of my electric liner the whole day. As we left the Red Apple, some members were just coming in for the 9am breakfast. (Some said they didn't even know there was a ride planned. Huh? Doesn't everyone read the newsletter?) It was a small contingent of hardy folks: Bob and Sally Wilson, Dick Dodd, and Jay Whyte. I think all wondered what was up when I began by leading them south toward a northerly destination. We first made a loop, coming into San Juan Bautista from the back side, taking Blackie Road into Castroville, and through Elkhorn Slough back to Watsonville.

Now it was time to actually head north. We went over Mt. Madonna into Gilroy for rest stop, then a little bit of 101 before cutting back to Monterey Road and a shopping/rest stop at Road Rider in San Jose. (I took the opportunity to spend some birthday money on two pairs of gloves.) Then we navigated as quickly as possible to Highway 85, then Saratoga Road through Saratoga and up to Skyline Boulevard, and finally 84 down to La Honda where we met Dale and Marilyn at 1:30. Unfortunately they had for some reason expected us at noon!

The restaurant became La Honda House sometime last summer. Everyone seemed happy with the food, and some of us even partook of their huge and very rich dessert offerings. Part of my chocolate cake came home with me in the top case.

Some of my fellow riders described the route I had chosen as *interesting*. It was said in such a way as to remind me of the putative Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting

times.” As I had only promised to get them to La Honda for lunch, I considered it a mission accomplished.

Speaking of this ride, as well as so many of our club rides, I have to hand it to Sally Wilson. What a great sport she is. As chilly as it was for the rest of us, it’s always worse for a passenger, and Sally shows up for almost all of our outings. She is quite often the only passenger, cold, rain, or heat notwithstanding. May she be an inspiration to other PPPs (Potential Pillion Partners) out there!

After lunch, Jay Whyte and I rode back up to Alice’s Restaurant to kick tire with some of the riders still hanging around. Jay spent some time talking with a fellow who had a Ural sidecar rig while I snapped pictures of his lovely passenger: a loveable mutt with goggles. A picture of her now adorns a page of our Web site.

We also visited Alice’s Motorcycle Shop and owner Jay Wesson. Jay’s main business seems to be restorations, and several shining examples were sitting out front of his shop. He also mentioned he really likes Beemer people. It seems even on the worst weather days at least one or two BMWs will show up at Alice’s.

### *Rides for 2005: Death Valley Anyone?*

As you can see elsewhere in this newsletter, we’ve made a lot of progress in setting up this year’s ride calendar. Be sure to stay informed by visiting the ride and events calendar on our Web site as well. Take a moment to scan the dates and destinations. Hopefully, you can make room on your personal calendar to join us.

Looking ahead to our first overnighiter, I’ll be leading a ride to Death Valley for the weekend of March 12. I plan on leaving Friday morning, March 11, but more details will follow in next month’s newsletter. I’ll also broadcast an email via our mailing list whenever important info becomes available, as many will need to make plans or reservations well in advance.

Of course, a ride doesn’t have to be all that *planned*. A great example was an invitation from Denny and Chuck Adkins for everyone at last Saturday’s breakfast to join them on a post-breakfast run to the Panoche Inn. They didn’t have to twist my arm. It was a gorgeous day for it, and after a brief visit with owner Larry Lopez, we came home by riding out Little Panoche Road to I-5 and thence to Santa Nella and back over Pacheco Pass.

### *Basque-ing in the Sun*

And speaking of rides, Chuck Hof has agreed to lead all who will follow to what has become one of our annual traditions: a visit to the Wool Growers Basque restaurant in Los Banos. As those know who have been there, you needn’t bring a big wallet, but your appetite better be primed. Do yourself a favor and skip breakfast that day, or at least eat a light one. You will *not* leave hungry! The food keeps coming until everyone yells uncle.

If you’re interested in other Basque restaurants, I found a list of them on a link from Buber’s Basque Page (<http://www.buber.net/Basque/Food/charley.html>) on the Web. There are several listed in California, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, and Oregon.

**Ron Aikins**