

Courage Ride with Mama Kat & "H" -

We set out, October 1st, at 8:30 in the morning. We are headed to the Courage Ride that starts in Wausau. This ride is of special significance to me. It is organized by Amy, a lady who recently lost her mother, Jeanie-Marie, to ovarian cancer. Amy put together a courage calendar - each month featuring a person who is fighting cancer, is in remission or has lost their battle with cancer. All different forms of cancer are represented. My son is October of 2011. He and I both are in the calendar on his page - along with a few words about his diagnosis, as well as his awesome outlook and personality. Proceeds from the ride, calendar sales etc go to the Jeanie-Marie fund and will help child-based organizations starting with Ronald McDonald House.



Son of a bitch it's colder than a witch's tit out! Factor in the windchill traveling at 65 mph and it's a whopping 10 degrees! "H" hates the cold, quite literally. But for me, for this ride, he has braved the cold. If he didn't already have a special place in my heart, this would have earned him one.

We both move, barely, as we have so many layers on. We stop a few times along the way to warm up. Cagers glance in our direction as we barrel down the highway - thinking we are crazy, I'm sure.

I watch H flexing his hands, trying to keep the circulation going and keep his hand from going numb, even in his gloves. I spend the first 50 miles hunkered down behind him, thinking warm thoughts. As the sun begins to shine down on us I am sitting up straight, enjoying the scenery and being very thankful for this day. OK - the sun had little to do with it - I was finally numb enough that it didn't matter, hunkered down or not.

We are late arriving at Wausau Harley Davidson - the starting point for the ride. Amy is inside running the registration. She greets me with a hug and quickly introduces me to other calendar families. Her father is there as well - I give him the warmest hug I can, trying to convey how sorry I am for his loss. It is unspoken among us, the hurt, the suffering. It is our connection, yet no one speaks of it. Not openly. Not easily.

Waiting around at the HD shop, we look at other bikes, getting ideas for new pegs, paint etc. I am drawn to the comfy seats. Did I mention my ass really takes a beating on this bike? Ha! Still, I'd rather ride and be sore than not to ride at all. And again, this is a special ride - well worth it.

The ride sets out - the temp already much warmer than it was when we left Eau Claire a few hours ago. We can shed a layer before heading out! Woo hoo!! After our ride to get there, the rest of the day is a piece of cake. It's warmer, more stops and we aren't in such a rush.

We get all of our stamps on our map and head over to The Bar for the final festivities. Some good grub, silent auction and prize drawings as well.

H bids on a light to go over a pool table. I tease him as to how he thinks we are going to get that home, should he win. Doh! He also bids on a basket of childrens books and CD's, all to get one book in the basket that he reads to his daughter. Did I mention this guy is a gem? He wins the books, some golf balls and we have an arm load of calendars to take home with us. Thankfully he does NOT win the light. *whew*

We head back to the motel and jump in the hot tub for a while - the chill of the day finally seeping out of our bones. Then to the room where we collapse happily and sleep soundly.

Up early the next morning - trying to figure out how to get our prizes into the saddle bags. They were stuffed to the gills on the way here, now what? H and I work on it and finally are on the road.

We stop at the exit for Abbotsford and grab a bite to eat. OK, my ass is really killing me now. Who designed this seat? There are two metal bars that run along the outside edges - guess where my butt bone sits on it? Yep, right on those bars. OUCH! Every bump makes me cry out or cringe in pain after more than a few hours on that seat. H shucks a layer, folds up his shirt and offers to pad the seat a bit for me. MUCH better!

We hit 29 again with about an hours travel time left to go. Suddenly I feel the bike slow. Just as I am about to ask why we are slowing down, I feel the bike wobbling beneath me. H gears down and heads for the side of the road. I hold on



tight, thinking that pavement is not going to feel very good if we lay it down. H eases the bike onto the shoulder and then down into a grassy ditch where we finally come to a stop and tip over. I'm off the bike, laying in the grass, he immediately asks if I'm OK. Next comment? "Good. Can you help me push 'er back up onto the road?"

With great effort we push her back up the slight embankment and onto the shoulder. The rear tire is flat as a pancake! He felt her dancing around before I did, hence the decrease in speed that I caught. I praise him for staying in control and not smearing me along the pavements surface.

After getting my heart to go back down where it belongs instead of in my throat, we start making phone calls for rescue. Finally we get a hold of someone. They have a trailer and will be here ASAP. We are there for a few hours, sitting along the side of the road. A few kind folks on scoots stopped to see if we are OK.

They actually went by, turned around and came back, all of them. It has turned out to be a beautiful day. Almost 70 degrees (where was this warmth yesterday AM?), we have a nice view and great company. We spend the time laughing and talking. Can't think of anyone else I would rather be stranded with! Help arrives and we load her up and make sure she is secure. Well, it was about time to put her away for the winter anyway, this just sped things up a bit. Finally home, safe and sound. I count my blessings from the weekends events. We met some wonderful people, won some nice prizes, had a great ride, arrived safely and raised money for a good cause in the name of a wonderful lady. All good.

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