What About You?

I will be blunt. Not brief. This may be the wrong time for brevity.

Deal with it.

It is possible that there will be at least one less member of the greater off-road community around, come November 15, 2024.

Someone could die because of their involvement in the Baja 1000.

Dead. Gone.

Will it be you?

"Of course not". "No way". "That stuff happens to other people!"

If it pleases you, just toss this thing now. After all, it's just the ranting of one of those guys who never lacked an opinion, or wasted the opportunity to thrust it upon you. Now is the time. There's a trash can around here somewhere. Toss it if you want to.

If, on the other hand, you might be open to what one guy with a little experience has to offer, read on.

People, the single biggest danger to our safety as we involve ourselves in this race is us. Us. We represent the single largest jeopardy to our own well being out of all the freak things that could happen. On the surface, it would seem that those most in danger of clobbering themselves are those that have less experience down there. I wonder.

I am one of those with experience, and I know how seductive it is to tell myself that my experience gives me license to risk more than those without it. "The rules are for the new guys" "I can compress time frames". "I can eat later". "I don't need to take a nap". "If I follow this stupid overloaded truck all night, I'll miss my deadline". "I've got great lights, and I can see past all 6 vehicles ahead of me and take them all in one pass".

This race is one long son of a gun. All drivers will feel the pressure to drive past sunset. It's a given. It's a must! There are loads of stories about Baja at night. What is interesting is that very few of the really scary stories come from the race cars. The most amazing and most tragic come from the highway travelers. Is that you? Have you had "Your Story" yet? It's out there, waiting for you. There have been times when the situation happens very far north. Like a tanker full of fish crashing around Santo Tomas, and closing the highway for over 5 hours. Now your time frames are shot. What do you do?

The history of what goes on and how we deal with it is not something to take lightly. Motorhomes crash. People fly, land, and suffer. Tractor-trailer rigs roll over and burn. A pickup full of drunk locals veers over the line and smacks a perfectly good Bronco with chasers in it.

It is not a case of "Will it happen?", but a fact that it will happen. To whom, we don't know. We will know when the flash comes on the radio. Not right away mind you, but only after all the wrong information has had its chance to stab the hearts of those that know names, and care.

Know this. Medical assistance for emergencies comes late, and is lacking. You have to hope that someone associated with the race will be close by and help you. It is first aid at best. Worse is going through a nasty wreck, and you coming through it fine, but your buddy is bleeding and out cold. You were behind the wheel. How do you feel? He trusted you to take care of business so he could sleep.

Here is what you should do to increase your chances of staying out of harms way.

Eat food even if you are not hungry.

(Energy drinks will not nourish. They are not food)

Drive for a maximum of 6 hours and give it to your partner.

(There is only one Ironman)

Leave early.

Plan on getting to your destination late.

Don't drink alcoholic stuff. Period.

Do not use drugs. Period.

Ask yourself, "Are we important enough to the people in the race car that they will feel good about us getting maimed trying to catch them?"

Ask yourself, "Would I do this if my kids were with me?"

Now…

Think about the great time you will have when you make it back home.

Think about the great feeling of being involved in the toughest off-road race in the world, and getting back home to tell the tales.

Think about how those at home will roll their eyes, and be patient, when you start on one of your stories.

Think about how proud of yourself you will be when you hear a horror story about someone else and realize you did things the right way, and went through the danger successfully.

It may sound corny, but think about how happy your Mom & Dad, or wife, or sister or brother, and yes, your kids, will be when you talk to them after you are home, safe and sound.

You've just had the adventure of a lifetime, and you are back! Wagging your tail, your mouth going like a ducks butt, telling everyone what an experience it was.

I'm going to the Baja 1000. I am going to have a ball. I won't forget a moment. It will be the biggest, baddest damn race ever.

And, I'm coming back from it.

With stories. With experiences. With laughs. With memories, and with the pride that comes of doing a good job.

What about you?

BB
"Life Is A One Lap Race!"

Posted with the permission of Bob Bower