

FISH TALES #2

St Louis IFGA Annual

The year escapes me but it was a St. Louis IFGA Annual back in the mid 1990s. After leaving our cars at Jon Madsen's house in New Jersey , Jon drove Ed Richmond and me to the Avis Car rental at the Newark ,New Jersey airport to rent a car. Yes that Thursday afternoon the three of us drove to the St. Louis IFGA Annual. The distance was roughly 950 miles and a little under 15 hours of driving. I remember us taking route 70. Gas was cheap and the rental car had unlimited mileage. At the last moment Jon decided to take out insurance for the car.

I was the youngest of the three man crew, as I was just 45, Eddie was 60 and the elder statesman was Jon at 62. Jon was my driving buddy when it came to going to fish shows, or even when we drove to Paul Gorski's house in Virginia and then trekked across Virginia to Bill Carwile's house near the Blue Mountains of Virginia on a nice Saturday morning , but that's another story for another time.

Well into the trip we stopped at Eddie's favorite place, the Cracker Barrel. I called Eddie the Buffet King", Find a Buffet and then Eddie was happy. Anyway we had a nice dinner at the Cracker Barrel, which was not a Buffet but nevertheless one of Eddie's favorite, then Jon asked for the check and told the waitress "three seniors please" for the senior discount... I said wait a minute " I ain't no dam senior, I'll pay the regular price", Jon broke out in a big roar and just could not stop laughing. I then said just because I am hanging out with you old buzzards that don't make me old.... After Dinner we continued on our trip, Jon still kept laughing in the car. I remembered us pulling into a rest stop for coffee , gas ,etc. in the early morning hours, then we continued on our trek. Well moving right along we got to the Show site a little before 8:00 AM Friday morning.

We checked into the hotel, ate breakfast and then went to the seminar, later that evening we went on a fish room tour. Saturday was the show , then the awards banquet. I then went to the bar had a few drinks with some others. Then I called it a night. While watching the news around 11:30 there was this pounding on the door. All I could hear was Schulterbrandt, Schulterbrandt, Schulterbrandt. I opened the door and there was the Cuban connection from Florida (names I won't mention). Lets go they said , I said where ?, they said to a nice gentlemen's establishment. So here we go three car loads of guys going into the badlands of East St. Louis. So down a long stretch across the railroad tracks we stopped at a 7 Eleven . One of the Cuban connection asked me to get out the car and ask for directions. I said what are you Freaking nuts.... So someone else got out and asked for directions. A short time later after travelling down that dark road , we saw that the whole sky was lit up. As we got closer we saw almost 500 cars parked all over the place. This was the Red Light district of East St. Louis. Needless to say we had fun, some more than others. When we got back around 3:00 AM in the morning, Jon was not in the room, as Jon went square dancing at a club right across from the hotel. Jon was very, very, very good at square/country dancing.

I went looking for Jon, and to my surprise there was Jon dancing away. The amazing thing there were 5 or 6 young ladies waiting for the next dance with Jon. Jon the lady killer, just having a ton of fun. I left went back to the room. About 2 hours later Jon came into the room. That old buzzard had more fun than all of us put together... Later on in the day we de-benched our fish and said our goodbyes. By 2:00 PM Sunday we were on our way back to New Jersey.

The trip seemed longer going back. We had to take over the driving from Jon as he was almost falling asleep at the wheel. Well we got back to New Jersey and Jon was now driving again after a nice rest period in the car. Only 2 miles from Jon's house going down a back road, a deer jumped out of nowhere to say hello and Jon ran right smack into the deer. The deer hobbled off. We then got out of the car and inspected the car. Right quarter panel totaled, grill totaled, left headlight smashed. The score was deer one, the car zero. And this is the last minute thought of Jon taking out car insurance at the last moment.

Right after the trip to the St Louis Annual, I started getting all sorts of mail from AARP. I thought that Jon had been up to his old tricks again. The funny thing here is I don't know what kind of awards we won, I only remember some of the events.... I guess that's what happens when you too become an "OLD BUZZARD"

St Louis IFGA ANNUAL when ??????????