

Mountain Madness Hits With A Crunch

by Sara J McBride

It had been a long day touring the Smokey Mountain National Park and Rick and I were on our way back to Tapoco Lodge. We entered the famous "Tail of the Dragon" and started to make our way through the 318 curves. We had decided earlier that we would not do a "spirited" run as we were tired (Melissa Forbes was following us). We headed up the mountain at a calm pace and passed an area known as the Overlook when two motorcycles passed us, signaling us to slow down. We slowed down more and tried to look ahead to see what the problem was. Since this area is known for fast sport bikes, we assumed one had crashed or that the police were up ahead looking for speeders. We were two miles south of the Overlook when another biker passed us, signaling us to slow down again. I slowed down more and was heading into a hairpin curve when I looked to my right and saw a semi with a 45 foot trailer heading into the same curve. I stopped the car and was attempting to throw it into reverse as he came around the curve. I started yelling (a long H-e-y! if I remember right) and then watched as the trailer hit us.

The car was wedged under the trailer with the rear wheels crunching the nose and driver's side front fender and the trailer resting on the windshield header. (The driver said later he thought he had cleared me and hit the brakes when he heard me yelling.) There we were, stuck under 78,000 pounds of frozen chicken. The



driver couldn't get his rig backed up, and due to the weight on my car, I couldn't back out.

The entire road was blocked and bikers and other motorists were there to help. It was decided the only way to get the car out was to have everyone push down on the back of the car and then move it sideways and just bounce me out. The plan worked, though I could hear the windshield creaking as they did this. Yes, I was in the car the whole time. I couldn't open my door and didn't have enough clearance to get over the center console. I had pretty much gotten over my "potty mouth extremeis", but after I got out of the car, I was ready to confront the driver. When I looked up into the cab, here's a great big man in tears. "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry" he kept saying. I just couldn't yell at him.

We went back down the mountain and Rick and Melissa went to find a phone to call the police. No cell phone signals in the mountains! I talked to the biker who was leading the truck through and he confirmed that driver was going too fast. The biker tried to slow him down, but the truck was always right on his tail.

My car is drivable, but is going to need a lot of work. The most important thing, Rick and I were not hurt.

Let's be careful out there!

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