

Hep A and a great late season ride

By Jeff Crabb

First of all, let me tell everyone who Hubert and I south of Berea riding may have not heard. If you ate at Frisch's in October 2018, you need to get a Hep A shot ASAP! On November 2nd, our Saturday breakfast place confirmed that an employee at the restaurant had been diagnosed with a confirmed case of hepatitis A. The health department says customers who ate at the restaurant between October 10 and October 28 may have been exposed to the virus. Get your shots. One now and another in six months. Kentucky's hepatitis A outbreak includes more than 2,000 cases and 16 people have died.

If my last ride of the year (due to weather) was on November 4th, I can live with that. That day found around on state routes 1617 and 1786. If you've never ridden in this area, you owe it to yourself to venture down at your earliest available time. The roads hug a valley and make a great loop. You can spend hours on the roads in that area and not be disappointed.

This month we have articles from John Rice depicting an August ride on the Blue Ridge Parkway and from Paul Elwyn taking us along for a ride to Jenny Wiley State Park.

Please enjoy and remember, send all of your contributions to apex@bluegrassbeemers.org.

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Blue Ridge Parkway

By John Rice

For Brenda and I, scheduling is controlled these days by our respective medical appointments and arrangements for Simon, the 15 pound rescue dog who dominates the house. Between these and a few other complications, planning for our annual motorcycle trip went through a lot of revisions, starting out as a month in the West, working its way down finally to 9 days on the Skyline and Blue Ridge Parkways in early August.

We left at the crack of 10:30, after dropping Simon off at the pet sitter, who we suspect he likes better than us. By noon we were in West Union, Ohio where an excellent historic restaurantwas closed. We found lunch in Peebles at the usually reliable Mel's Downtown Cafe, but they were uncharacteristically out of pie. Still, the food was good and we were on our way for a bike trip, so all can be forgiven.

Our first night was at the Old Lafayette Hotel in Marietta OH, a wonderful sample of the past bygone era. Marietta was established on the Ohio River bank, near its confluence with the Muskingham River in 1788, one of the first outposts in the "west" for a fledgling country. In 1825 the Marquis de Lafayette, the French hero of our Revolution, came for a visit and the name of the current hotel marks that occasion. The predecessor hotel, the Bellevue, was built in 1892 and, like so many of the fire-heated hotels of the era, burned to the ground in 1916. The Lafayette was opened on the same site two years later and continues today in much the same form with its modern concessions seamlessly worked into the experience so that

guests feel the history without the inconveniences their historical counterparts would have considered being normal. Our room overlooked the river and the parking lot where the sidecar rig sat awaiting our return. Three Harleys and one Harley trike, all with New Jersey plates, were next to the rig but they wouldn't stay in that spot for long.

As we were having an early dinner at a table in the restored hotel tavern, the biker guys were at the bar when suddenly they all got up and rushed out of the room. It seems that the bartender had told them that rain was coming in. From the window we saw them sprinting to their machines, firing them up and as if es-





caping, running from the lot. Later we found the four bikes parked under the loading dock awning at the back of the hotel.

There are old phone booths in the lobby, now serving as information centers where one can listen to recordings telling of the history. The front desk is recessed into a sort of office where once an imperious hotel manager oversaw his domain. There would have been a board back there with large brass keys hanging and probably a place for sending and re-

ceiving a telegram. I can picture this place in its heyday, paddlewheel riverboats docked by the street outside unloading passengers in the ornate dress of the day and cargo in wooden crates, wagons waiting to take both to their disparate destinations, the draft horses exhaling steam and stamping their big hoofs in impatience to get going. Somehow the modern traffic of SUV's and silent four door lookalike cars just doesn't have the same impact. In the tavern there would have been men in suits, smoking cigars

and making plans, some nefarious, some futuristic. Women in their finery would have been confined to the lobby or the separate restaurant in those times, though no doubt they were making plans as well, some of which may not have been to the liking of those cigar-smoking men.

Our room overlooking the river was small by modern hotel standards, but had that historic feel we were hoping for. The furniture was periodcorrect, ornate dark wood with carvings one had to study to see all of the intricate touches left by a craftsman's hand. There is a desk with

dozens of perfectly formed little cubbyholes, including a spot for an inkwell, should the traveler need to send correspondence down the line. The en suite bathroom, with its modern shower, is an amenity the original guests could not have imagined, but certainly would have appreciated.

In the morning, breakfast was in the Gun Room restaurant, where we sat at the next table from the Jersey guys. They were dressed to ride, black t-shirts, vests, engineer boots,



and jeans, and overhearing their conversation, four feet away, they sounded like movie characters in a film about a mob heist. The biggest guy had the Al Pacino accent and phrasing down pat. But their talk was of office jobs, kids, daycare, dogs and suburban traffic problems. Appearances and first impressions can be deceiving.

Since this was the Rice's on a bike trip vacation, there was of course a major storm moving in. The weather forecast predicted gloom and doom so we decided to make a run for it, eastbound and down, headed for shelter in Front Royal, Virginia where the Skyline Drive begins. The R1200GS/DMC Expedition rig pointed its nose to the rising sun and hauled gluteus maximus for the rest of the day, pausing only for a very nice lunch break at a coffee bar in Buchannon, WV. Even when fleeing destruction, one must take care to enjoy a good meal. We made it, dry but chilly, finding lodging across the street from the Pavemint, a nice brewpub on the edge of the historic downtown. (There seems to be a pattern

here...) A good nitro stout was on offer, with dinner of loaded fries covered in chimicuri sauce, queso and jalapeños, followed shortly by Tums.

In the cool morning, no rain just yet, we started down the Skyline to complete the trip that got cut short last year. As always, the peace of the parkway comes over us as we ascend the long hill to the ridgeline that we will follow all the way to North Carolina. There is fog here and there and the deer are coming out for their morning forage, delicately picking their way along the sides of the road. Frenetic squirrels, moving as if their primary food source was coffee, scurry from one side to another, tails high and twitching as they and we try to avoid their contact with our wheels. We made it to the Skyland Lodge just in time for an early lunch. The she-crab soup, an exquisite concoction, unfortunately was unavailable, but the apple pie was just as good as I remembered it.

Further down, after the seamless transition onto the Blue Ridge Parkway, we stopped at a



park shop so that I could pick up the latest "gas map" showing where fuel is available off the parkway and Brenda found a nice jacket on sale. As we were going back to the rig, we encountered a van load of folks, two families with bunches of children, parked next to us, gathered around our bike. The men had questions about the mechanicals and the children each had a turn sitting in the sidecar and on the saddle. One little girl, about 6 years old, looked particularly contemplative when Brenda assured her that someday she could have a rig like this for her own. I hope she does.

Our destination for that night was, unusually for us, a reserved room. The Natural Bridge Hotel in Natural Bridge, VA sits on land that was part of 157 acres originally purchased by Thomas Jefferson in 1774 from King George III for 20 shillings, real estate being a tad cheaper in those days. The nearby stone arch that gives the area its name was considered one of the premier natural wonders of the day, rivaling Niagara Falls in appeal. Hermann Melville used the arch as an appropriate simile to describe the sight of the Great White Whale as it breached the surface. The first hotel was erected here in 1833 and underwent numerous expansions until it burned in 1963. The present structure was begun the following year and opened in 1965. It combines the modernity required by present day travelers with a definite feel of the history that it represents. The Red Fox tavern and the colonial-themed dining room share overlapping menus, allowing the guest to choose the level of intimacy he or she might like. The food is, of course, excellent. The rooms are a bit larger than the Lafayette's, but still have more of an older era feel than a cookie-cutter chain motel.

Outside the next morning, as I was mopping the rain off the rig, I met a fellow from Montreal, Canada doing the same to his setup, a Kawasaki Concours outfitted with a custom built trailer for some serious looking bicycles. He and his wife were on an extended vacation, staying for several days at locations with interesting bicycle venues. The rugged mountains of Virginia are not the place that I, in my twilight years, would choose to pedal a bicycle, but these exceedingly fit young folks seemed to be having a wonderful time with the challenge.

The rain returned by the time we left and our attempts to get back on the Parkway were thwarted by fog. After a few miles of riding inside what appeared to be wet gray cotton with visibility down to a few feet of road and the yellow line, we exited down to the surface roads for a while. At the bottom of the mountains, there were blue skies and warm air, so dramatic a change that it doesn't seem both this and what we had left behind could be real at the same time. We detoured through Roanoke and then made another stab at the Parkway. Now it was clear, though in and out of showers and at the less-than-1,000 feet level around this city we could again enjoy the scenery more than a few feet from the rig. Again in and out of light showers, we made it to Copper Creek where a fuel and rest stop was required. Before I could finish fueling, a car had stopped and disgorged several small children followed by doting grandparents. They asked if the kids could sit in the sidecar and of course we agreed. Soon there were children in the car, on the saddle and holding on behind the "driver". The adults opined that they remembered seeing sidecars in their small town when they were young, but found them to be a rarity today.

Lunch was at Mabry Mill right on the Parkway, where a hungry rider can get a plate with one cornmeal pancake and one of oatmeal, cooked just the way you tell them you want it. In the parking lot, more "sidecar delay factor" encounters, one with a young woman in a wheelchair who got very interested when we told her that there were such things as rigs that could be driven from such a chair mounted in the car. An "older" couple, i.e. about our age, asked the usual question, "why do you travel by this when you could be in a safe, dry automobile?" As the short answer, we told them the "in an automobile you're watching the movie. On a motorcycle, you're in the movie" cliché and they seemed to understand.

More rain took us to Mt. Airy, the spiritual home of all things Andy Griffith and Mayberry, for the night. We spent it in a motel, rather than bothering Andy and Barney for the use of an empty cell. The desk clerk told us that flooding was predicted for the river that ran just a short distance from the parking lot, but "it hardly ever gets up here". At breakfast the cashier, a lady just a bit younger than us, told Brenda that she had a jacket just like hers and liked to ride her Can-Am three wheeler as often as she could in these North Carolina mountains.

Back to the Parkway, but rain and fog again drove us to the surface roads. Pulling into a gas station near Hillsville, I found that what I thought was a bit of standing water in the lot was instead a deep depression, causing the rig to violently pitch to the right and then left as it entered the hole. When we stopped, I saw that the luggage rack on the car had come loose from its closure clips and was standing upright with the 25 pound pack still bungeed in place. I expected to see shattered fiberglass where the pivots attached to the back of the sidecar, but there was no apparent damage despite the dramatic forces applied. Those DMC folks sure can engineer a sidecar to stay together.

The sun made a brief appearance and it looked like the fog at the peaks was lifting, so up Rt. 18 we went to make another pass at the Parkway. Stopping in at the Freeborne's motel and restaurant compound, right at the junction, we met a couple from Dallas riding a Honda 1800 cruiser. They had been on a month long

excursion up to the Maritimes which included one of our favorites, the Cabot Trail in Nova Scotia, and now were on their way home. They told us that in Newfoundland, summer lasts "30 minutes" and there had been snow in July.

We chased the rain into Blowing Rock, to the Alpine Village motel, just down the hill off Main Street. The owners are a couple in their mid 50's, and the husband, a long time Harley rider, had just bought a used BMW R1200RT for touring, telling me that he figured he only had about 10 more years to ride. "I can't think that I'll still be able to do that at 70", he said. When I told him I would reach that milestone in just a few weeks, he gave me a surprised expression and a congratulatory fist bump. I could see the metaphorical wheels turning in his mind with the possibilities, as he gave us



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some suggestions for local backroads to explore. His wife came by with their dogs, a young German Sheppard mix and a old Lab, making the rounds of the guests sitting on their porches. The older dog then took up his customary spot, half in and half out of the door to the office, eyes closed, and his head resting on his big paws. Why, I wondered, do we need any other form of tranquilizers when we have Labrador Retrievers?

A few yards up the hill is the Blowing Rock Brewing Company, a restaurant and brewpub, for supper. The food is good pub fare and the beer is interesting. Our pleasant young waitress, after splashing some on the table, told us that she had started out at Cracker Barrel, but was let go because she spilled too many drinks on the customers. There is something to be said, I suppose, for consistency.

The next day we took the owners' suggestions and found Railroad Grade Road which follows the New River along the old Virginia Creeper rail bed. About 20 miles west is Whitetop Station, one of the higher points in these mountains and the beginning of the Virginia Creeper bicycle and hiking trail that goes

34 miles down the other side of the mountain into Abingdon, VA. There were more pedal bikes than motorized traffic on the blacktop here, meandering silently along the riverbank to the tiny town of Todd, eventually ending up back via Cranberry Springs, in Boone. The Wildcraft Eatery there provided lunch, a curry bowl dish the contents of which were absolutely delicious but largely unidentifiable, out on the deck.

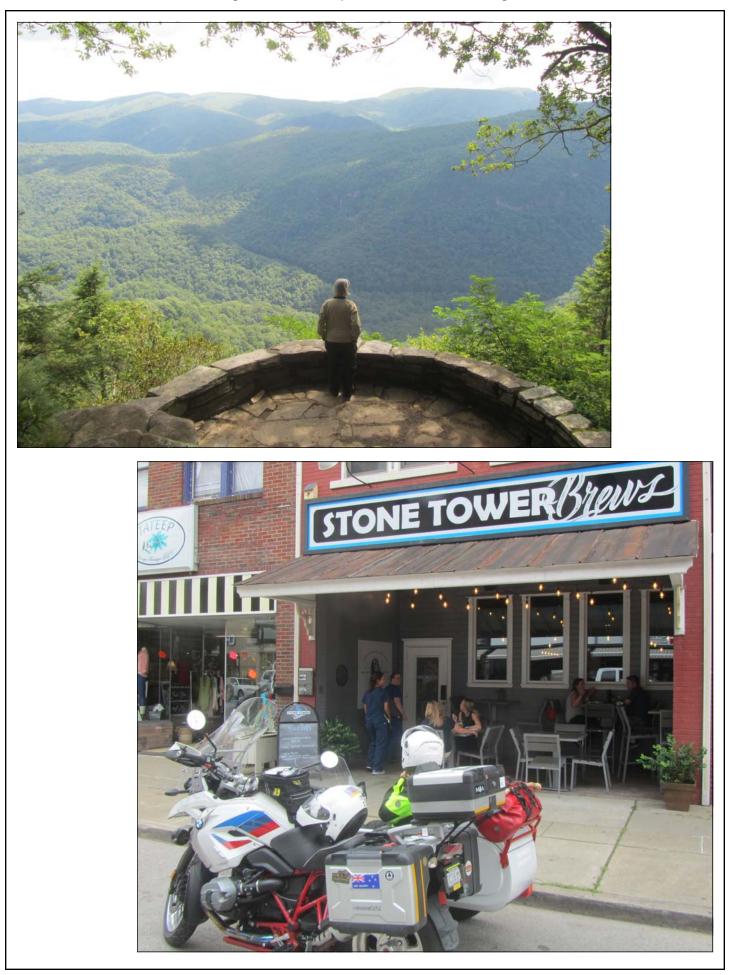
As we left town in the morning, we passed the entrance to the venue for a major horse show, from which the human participants had crowded the streets the night before. The enormous SUVs and tractor trailer rigs lined the shoulders of the road, gleaming in the sun, eclipsed only by the pampered horses they had hauled. These glorious animals were the epitome of their breeds and they seemed to know it, heads held high and coats shining, attended by multiple handlers brushing and touching up this and that for perfection. I thought to myself that if ever I need to justify the time and expense of my motorcycling addiction, I can say at least that it's not as costly as this!

Nature had deigned to give us a break today with perfect weather up on the Parkway. Blue skies, puffy after-the-storm clouds and wonderfully cool air coming through my jacket vents as Brenda sat calmly in the sidecar taking in the scenery. Soft sunlight is filtering down through the leaves, dappling the pavement and the boxer engine is purring contentedly, sipping that same cool air and the rig sails along in the place it was made for. It is a cliché to say "it doesn't get better than this", but actually, it doesn't . A bit further down we make an early lunch stop at the Little Switzerland store and cafe for excellent salads and a memorable peach pie for dessert.



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But Ma Nature doles out her gifts as she pleases, and later it amused her to drench us again in a series of brief showers. I've often said that to really appreciate being warm, dry and comfortable, a person needs to spend some time being cold, wet and uncomfortable. It heightens the senses. Fortunately modern riding gear means we aren't too much of any of those things now, but still, I get the idea. At found a butterfly garden at an overlook, a rest stop, we met a couple from Wisconsin riding a BMW R1200GS, pulling a camper trailer. When I told them I had ridden in their state recently to take a ferry ride on the SS Badger across Lake Michigan, they said that they had never taken it, though they've lived there all their lives. Not unusual, since we tend to ignore the attractions of our own neighborhood. However they had ventured

to China recently and had taken a sidecar tour up to the Great Wall. The husband told me that his Chinese guide had let him drive the sidecar rig for a while.

After an overnight in Asheville, we continued south for the best part of the Parkway, the constant curves along the highest stretch of the mountain chain. At just over 6,000 feet, we prompting me to wonder just how the delicate little creatures make it up to this altitude with its high winds and diminished oxygen. Perhaps they are not as fragile as they appear. We made the long descent of sweeping curves into Cherokee, managed to make it through town without succumbing to the temptations of the casinos, and found a room at one of our favorite spots, the Oak Park Inn in Waynesville,



NC. From this old-school motel it is a short walk into the tourist-friendly town for a stroll among the shops and dinner at one of the several good restaurants. We chose the Sweet Onion on this night, which did not disappoint. On the way home now, that part of any trip where the territory is familiar and the tractorbeam pull of the barn is starting to be felt. We chose to go through the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, just because we hadn't recently, and found that we weren't the only ones so inclined. The trail heads were jammed with cars bringing folks of all ages toting backpacks. I had a mental image of the jam out there in the woods, with the hikers looking like rush hour on the 5 freeway in Southern California, park rangers frantically trying to direct traffic.

Gatlinburg, Tennessee seems to have recovered well from the recent fires, with a full complement of tourists crowding the sidewalks and streets as we motored slowly through town and out onto the two lanes headed north. The rain returned as we passed a holiday couple, in shorts and t-shirts, driving a rented roofless Slingshot three wheeler back



into town. The male appeared to be attempting to explain to his now soaked female companion why getting one of these was still a good idea. Our final night on the road

was spent in Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, a tiny town at the base of what had been the main passage from the "civilized" east into the terra incognita of the west back in colonial times. Now the multi lane tunnel blasted through the mountains a mile or so away takes travelers through the barrier without a hitch, thousands per day, but back in the 18th century, the journey was not so easy. Nearby there is a monument, at the beginning of the now restored trail, showing replica footprints of the adventurers and families who made the arduous trek into what is now Kentucky. There are hoof prints of horses, pack mules, boots large and small and of course the barefoot imprints of children, accompanied by the paw prints of the necessary dogs, not house pets but valued guardians and hunters. There were no prints of cats in evidence, but as we know, cats make their own way.

As we strolled the town, we met Ralph McClannahan, a retired Kentucky judge who has established in this unlikely place the Little Congress Bicycle Museum, housing many historic examples of non-powered two wheeled transportation. A practiced storyteller, Ralph can keep you far more interested in bikes and related yarns than you had ever imagined. Dinner was at Angelo's, a restaurant in an historic building that once housed a stable and a brothel back in the day, which now caters to the hikers and students that populate the area in the summer months. The menu is eclectic, the beer list extensive and a good meal experience is a certainty.

For a trip that didn't suffer under a great deal of planning, one that at times we thought just wouldn't happen, it had been again a marvelous time. Yes, there was rain, but for us there always is and as Brenda often says, if she wasn't getting wet on a motorcycle it wouldn't really be a vacation. The sidecar rig is the perfect vehicle for such unplanned meanderings, we will do this again.

Roads Less Traveled

By Paul Elwyn

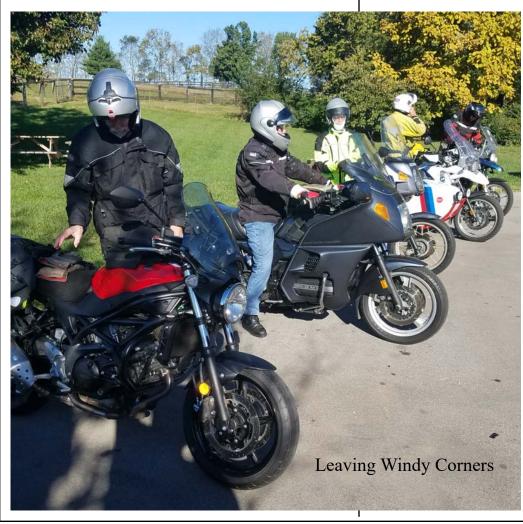
Not all motorcycle rides reach out to exotic locations, create Facebook-worthy saga, nor do they accomplish chest-thumping feats.

In fact, one can make a case for the small trip to a setting not far from home, with no other purpose than to savor friendly weather on roads less traveled with some kindred souls determined to enjoy motorcycling at a quiet pace. And in that quiet pace, we have time to reflect.

On October 24 and 25, John Rice, Jay Smythe, Hubert Burton, Jim Brandon, Ben Prewitt and I managed to travel less than 200 miles each day, wiggling our way over small roads beginning with a 9:30 am breakfast at Windy Corners Market off Bryan Station Road.

Following a leisurely breakfast, we began with KY 57 to North Middleton to pick up US 460 to Mt. Sterling for our first stop, Gateway Cycles, less than 50 miles from breakfast, about the right distance to download coffee and remove some early-morning gear.

Gateway offers an interesting mix of new products from Kawasaki, Royal Enfield, Benelli, Kymco, and Hyosung. How about a 250cc v-twin sport bike? Have you checked out the Royal Enfield adventure single Hima-



layan or Continental GT Café bikes?

John Rice spent most of his time hovering over and sitting on the GT, smiling from ear to ear. I was struck by the Kawasaki Ninja 400 twin and Benelli 300 single. Imagine 44 bhp in a 366 pound bike. But the little Ninja isn't about speed. It is about rider engagement.

Small bikes, small roads.

In addition to the new bikes, the shop always features a large selection of used bikes, this time including Triumph, Harley, and BMW models with tempting low prices.



ment available. We loafed through Ezel, Grassy Creek, to West Liberty where we pickup KY 172 to leave the "big road" and wiggle through Elkfork, Moon, Relief and Volga to reach Paintsville, only about 90 miles from Mt. Sterling.

By this time, about 2:30 pm or so, we were ready for a break, and so began our tour of Paintsville in search of food.

With John in the lead, we did several laps on narrow one-way streets in search of old lunch haunts from John's court days. We found Wilma's, a local favorite with Wilma at the reg-

Some shops seem to be more into watching the clock than talking motorcycles. Gateway is old school friendly with lots to see.

With sunny skies and warming temperatures inviting us back onto the road, we worked our way through Mt. Sterling to pick up KY 713 on our way to US 460 and Frenchburg, covering another 24 miles on some of the best pave-

ister for 64 years.

With pie in our bellies, we finished the day with a 15-mile run down KY 321 and KY 302 to Jenny Wiley State Park where stark yet comfy rooms awaited us.

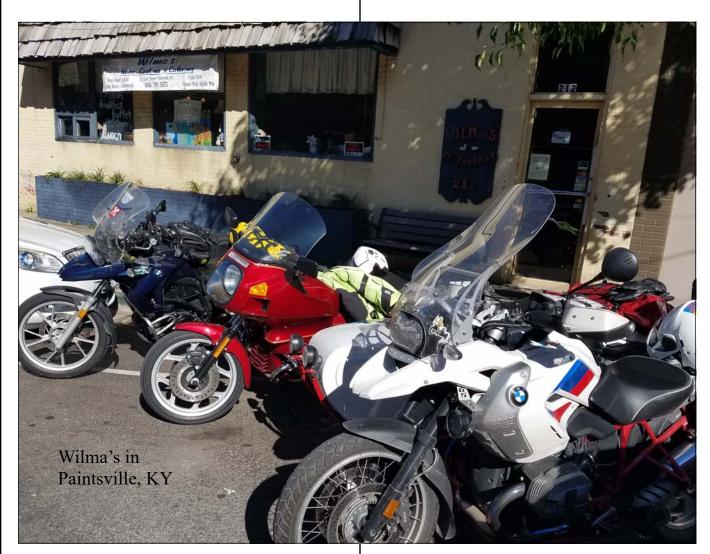
The bar was open, the food was satisfying, and we debriefed in comfort a stunningly beautiful autumn day having covered fewer than 200 miles.

Cloudy skies and fog greeted us in the morning, but we enjoyed a hot breakfast prior to the ride back along the lake to find KY 201 and US 32 back to Morehead.

With little traffic and a perfect mix of sweep-

Over the entire overnight trip we covered less than 400 miles, but the riding was as satisfying as any of the cross-country rides I have taken, largely because of the fellow riders in this case and the quiet roads.

Kentucky winters offer opportunities for re-



ers, our roads less traveled made the cloudy and cool morning run to Morehead a pleasant time.

In Morehead, John took the lead once again to one of his favorite pie stops, Root-A-Bakers Bakery.

We enjoyed a delightful lunch, and our firsttime guests received a complimentary sugar cookie! This is a MUST stop!

From Root-A-Bakers we ran US 60 until going our separate ways toward Winchester, Lexington, Georgetown, and Danville. laxing rides on smaller roads, worthy time in contrast to the bigger rides that become more a matter of covering ground.

Motorcyclists, I like to think, in general take roads less traveled in life. We may not agree on much, but in the big picture we are different, and riding ensures this condition in a way that non-riders cannot understand.

In this age of extreme voices, it's a blessing to find sanctuary on roads less traveled.



Root-A-Bakers Bakery Do you need another reason to visit??

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29°F 11/21/98 WHEN THE COLD OF NOVEMBER COMES EARLY, WHEN THE BOKES STAY DARK IN THE SHED. THEN THE BEST OF US BECOME SURLY . AS THE CORDERS GROWIN OUR HEAD ... (a)) Here's the group for tokey : .). Paul Elwyn * 2) Jim Brendon + 3) John Rice * 4). Chris Warner * 3. Hubert Burton 4). Chester Martin) Ros atkins 2). Boone Sutherland 9). Peter Golskin * 10). Bill Vars 1). Mary Beard 12). Ray Rowlett Boone 13). Stave Bishap 1. P. Randy Scott 15). Philip Baugh

Books available on loan

The following books are available on loan. Email me when you want to borrow one, and I will bring it to breakfast (or whatever other arrangements need to be made...I can deliver within reason) and I'll put your name beside it on my list.

I don't mind if people keep them a while (it takes me forever to read a book now....I keep falling asleep and then have to reread the last 10 pages or so) but I don't want to give them away for good. At least not yet.



John Rice

Bahnstormer By LJK Setwright Streetwise By Malcolm Newell The Bart Markel Story By Joe Scalzo Mann of his Time By Ed Youngblood Yesterday's Motorcycles By Karolevitz The Scottish By Tommy Sandham This Old Harley By Michael Dregni Racer: the story of Gary Nixon By Joe Scalzo All But My Life: Bio of Stirling Moss By Ken Purdy (OK, not a motorcycle book, but who doesn't like and respect Stirling Moss?) Investment Biker By Jim Rogers Obsessions Die Hard By Ed Culbertson BMW Twins & Singles By Roy Bacon Bitten by the Bullet By Steve Krzystyniak & Karen Goa Cafe Racers of the 1960's By Mick Walker More Proficient Motorcyling By David Hough Tales of Triumph Motorcycles & the Meriden Factory: By Hancox Sport Riding Techniques By Nick lenatasch Total Control By Lee Parks Smooth Riding By Reg Pridmore.



A Twist of The Wrist (Vol 1 & 2) By Keith Code Triumph Tiger 100 and Daytona By J. R. Nelson This Old Harley (anthology) By Dregni Side Glances By Peter Egan Mondo Enduro By Austin Vince Big Sid's Vincati By Matthew Bieberman 101 Road Tales By Clement Salvadori Riding with Rilke By Ted Bishop Legendary Motorcycles By Luigi Corbetta Red Tape and White Knuckles By Lois Pryce A Man Called Mike By Hilton (bio of Mike Hailwood) The Perfect Vehicle By Melissa Pierson One Man Caravan By Robert Fulton (first known circumnavigation of the world by motorcycle) Monkey Butt By Rick Sieman Ariel: The postwar models By Roy Bacon Short Way Up By Steve Wilson Endless Horizon By Dan Walsh Leanings (1 & 2) By Peter Egan Into the Heart of Africa By Jerry Smith The Last Hurrah By Des Molloy (Autographed copy, with DVD of the trip) Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry By Bert Hopwood Down the Road By Steve Wilson Motorcycling Excellence By Motorcycle Safety Foundation Leanings 3 By Peter Egan Ghost Rider By Neal Peart **Revolutionary Ride** By Lois Pryce How to Drive a Sidecar Rig by David Hough