

MOVING VIOLATIONS: CAN THEY BE STOPPED?

RetroTours, July 4th weekend, 2011

Peg Preble Kristine Grimes Becky Brown

Anke Conzelmann
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Amy Blackmond
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EASTMAN COLOR

Mad dogs from hell!

Hunting down their
prey with a quarter-ton
of hot steel between
their legs!



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MOVING VIOLATIONS: JULY FORTH WEEKEND...2011

The official RetroTours Schedule showed a four day ride to West Virginia for this long weekend but Peg was the first person to make definite plans. She had been on a few tours in recent years and I knew she was also involved in a group of very dedicated women who rode regularly: a club called Moving Violations. I had suggested to Peg on several occasions that she should recruit some of her club members for a RetroTour and it was finally coming together: Peg had six recruits and wanted to 'book out the weekend'. Customizing rides for groups like this is something I have been wanting to do for a long time so I had no problem scrapping the original ride plan and incorporating this group's wants and desires into a two day ride with an overnight stay here before and after to allow for travel. Riders would be arriving by air and by land Friday afternoon and evening from Boston, New Hampshire and Pittsburg. We planned two 200 mile days with an overnight in Danville, PA. After staying over again Sunday night, riders would have Monday, a holiday, for travel back home.

Mechanically, things got off to a bad start. I had borrowed a friend's SUV with 7 passenger capabilities to pick up 6 of the 7 women at the Philadelphia International Airport. Two flights about an hour apart meant that I would pick up 5 riders; we would eat lunch at a diner near the airport then pick up the final rider and head for home base. When we stopped for lunch Peg, who worked as an auto mechanic before becoming an electrician, commented that the car smelled like burning brakes. While the food was being prepared I looked at the rear drums and one of them was just about red hot. A call to the car's owner revealed that it had just been picked up that morning after a brake job: Houston, we have a problem!

Really, brakes only slow things down so I drove *really* slowly and used the transmission to keep our speed in check, nursing the car along and hoping that nothing would catch fire. I dropped off the women at home and took the car directly back to the repair shop. Some additional work would be needed! People were settling in by the time I got back home and Lynn was preparing dinner. One last rider arrived by bike from Pittsburg which is about 6 hours by highway: these gals are serious about riding! We ate a hearty meal and took a really long walk around a country block getting to know each other a bit and just stretching out the kinks.



Later in the evening waivers were completed, route sheets and maps were distributed and explained, bikes were chosen and loaded and safety inspections were completed. We were then ready for a smooth early departure on Saturday morning.



I LOVE THIS HARLEY XLCR!

The first 25 miles were transitional. Most of these riders had never operated a kick starter on a big road bike. Many had never ridden a bike with “proper” traditional British or European pre-standardized control layout. Also, they were accustomed to riding together in a tight group. All of this proved very interesting as we bucked and stalled our way along enduring a few near misses when someone inevitably shifted the wrong way or worse, shifted the brake pedal. Soon we were all able to agree that tight formation riding would be best left for another day and as is usually the case, smooth operation arrived once sufficient mileage had been covered. It’s a typical learning curve and every group goes through it.



Simple see: it's down for up.

Peg was leading the group while I swept the tail in the sidecar rig. We soon discovered that my carefully prepared route sheet contained errors, each of which caused Peg to veer off course. Fortunately Peg has been leading test rides for US Kawasaki for many years and with her experience, she made the glitches all but disappear as we made our way north on scenic route 82 to our first break stop at Hopewell Furnace.



Here we were able to adjust our riding gear; the temperature was climbing rapidly and it looked to be a scorcher. We also walked around and checked out the restored village where iron was smelted in the old days using Anthracite coal, newly discovered in nearby central Pennsylvania coal mines. A stream turned a water wheel that drove a bellows which stoked the fire to melt the iron. We sat in a cool barn and watched a demonstration before trickling out to saddle up once more.



We crossed the eastern continental divide and the Appalachian Trail on a gravel road that was 5 miles long and it climbed steeply, affording excellent



views of the valley below. This came right after the first gas stop which also involved the first bike swap. Everything that had been mastered in the first 75 miles now had to be thrown out the window as the new control layouts on different bikes had to be learned. It's always a little bit humorous (and a little bit frightening) to see a group of riders wobbling way from the first bike swap.

Shift on the right, brake on the left, down is up, up is down. AAAAAHHHHHHH!

We flowed through the Zion Valley on route 339, fencing with the windmills like Don Quixote as we guided our iron horses along roads that have been damaged by recent flooding, arriving around 3 o'clock at Bill's Old Bike Barn in Bloomsburg. If you haven't been there I really can't explain it. Bill and Judy have been collecting EVERYTHING (including motorcycles and everything relating to motorcycles) for decades. Look at the pictures and get there as soon as you can. www.billsbikebarn.com. Better yet, join us on a RetroTour soon that includes a stop at Bill's.



Everywhere you turn there are displays: the walls, the ceiling, inside and outside, every nook and cranny contains something interesting. Besides bikes and related memorabilia there are cars, trucks, tractors, carousels, wrought iron fencing from Europe, a 1933 World's fair room, a complete post office, an old hotel lobby and bar, a Coco Cola room and on and on.



What started as an old wooden barn that was re-erected inside a steel building has blossomed into a historical juggernaut which includes a small restaurant room from an old Italian hotel where Judy, who is also a gourmet cook, has prepared our



lunch. It begins with a fizzy, cold pomegranate drink and ends with a kiwi/lime pastry delight. In the middle we are served chicken salad sandwiches that are so tasty and huge that we gorge ourselves trying to finish, then spend an hour walking around the museum to digest. Of course that's not nearly enough time to see everything but its getting late and we must move on. There *is* time for a group photo before we leave though.



TIME FOR A PARTING SHOT

Bill, Judy and Joel on the left, Moving Violations on the right



Upon leaving Bill's we head west about 25 miles to Danville, PA where we have reservations at a Bed and Breakfast: "The Doctors Inn". On the way I miss a turn so we do a 'group U-turn' in a cute park by the river and somehow we manage to ride through someone's wedding! We use the wide driveway to execute a smooth maneuver and the bride and groom never skip a beat under the canopy right next to us. The guests obviously thought our little procession was part of the ceremony; how cute! At the Inn we are greatly impressed with the restoration on this old home done by the young couple who operate the B&B. While raising three (or is it four?) of the cutest little girls, these guys have managed the inn and run in a number of marathons. Talk about overachievers! The rooms are terrific in their Victorian splendor; my 'man cave' in the basement is spacious, cool and comfortable. I think the little girls may have been affected forever (positively!) by the sight of seven women pulling up on vintage motorcycles.



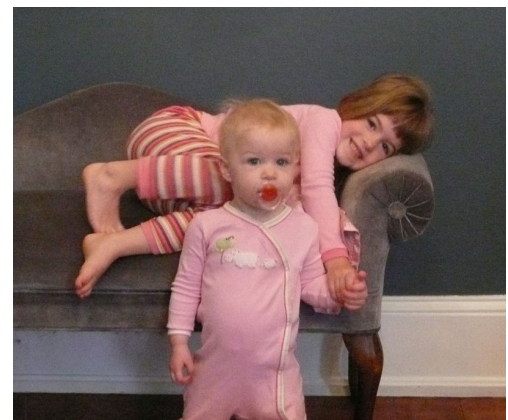
Prepare to eat my exhaust plume little one



That evening, after resting for a bit, we walk the town of Danville learning about its history and admiring the architecture of the many downtown buildings that were built in the 1800's and have been recently restored to their original splendor. We choose from three or four interesting eateries and dine in style.



A violent storm during the night rocks the people sleeping upstairs but I don't hear a thing in the basement. Breakfast is a holistic home made treat and we say our goodbyes before roaring off into the morning mist.



Today is good day to ride and we turn west before picking up route 235 south. This is one of my favorites, crossing three mountains before angling east to the Susquehanna River where a vintage ferry will carry us across. The wet mountain roads are no problem for these riders now. They are adjusting well to the bikes and showing above average skills together with great group riding etiquette. At one point we do manage to split into two groups but a cell phone call puts things right again as we cut across Pleasant Valley and arrive at the Millersburg Ferry.



“Actually, this is kinda fun isn’t it?”

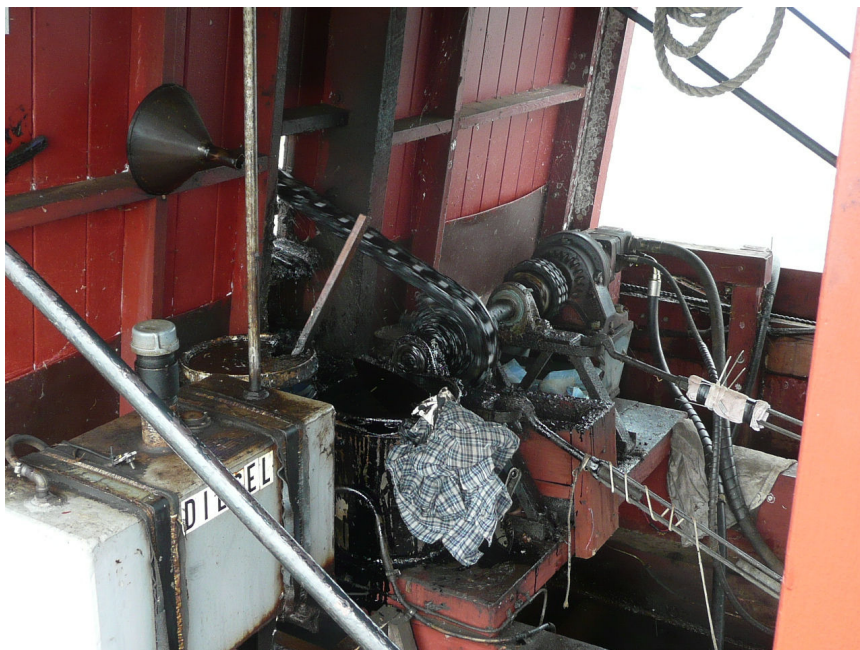
We open the ‘door to nowhere’ to signal for the ferry and hang around the ‘urban campground’ for a while waiting for the next trip across.



The ferry boat itself is called the Roaring Bull and it's quite remarkable; the oldest continuously operating ferry boat in the country if I'm not mistaken.



It uses a stern mounted paddle wheel driven by a hydraulic pump which is powered by a diesel engine; quite a contraption!



On the east side of the river we take some pleasant roads that are definitely off the beaten track unless you are an Amish family heading home from Sunday home church meeting in which case these roads are like superhighways. It has stopped raining but its blazing hot and we all really need a stop for a MONSTER ice cream cone.



This thing is scaring me!

Finally we return home and Lynn has really outdone herself: the dinner that is waiting is amazing! Everyone unloads their baggage from the sidecar, hits the shower and meets out on the deck for our farewell meal (and drinks).



It was a great weekend with no mechanical issues and excellent riding and accommodations. Nobody crashed and we bonded in a special way. The group dynamic is always one of the most special parts of any RetroTour: I just love to see how a group becomes a cohesive unit; everyone brings something positive to the table. In this case, being the only male riding with a group of seven women made the whole group dynamic thing unique and when male friends ask me what it was like to ride with a bunch of women I answer them like this. These women are first and foremost dedicated, serious and skillful motorcyclists. They traveled far and spent a lot of money to do this ride. They rode hard and made very few mistakes; all part of the learning curve, no different than any other group. Riding with them and hanging out was FUN and pretty much like being with a bunch of guys except that everyone was much more considerate! Thanks Peg for bringing us all together and I hope we can do it again and again.



For Peg it's always about the Kawaskis. She bleeds lime green! Here with the W-3.



Back at home and just prior to a relaxing soak in the hot tub Marjie, Becky and Amy compare bruises. Learning to kick start big street bikes can be fun! (and a bit painful)

I think everyone loved the Harley. It really is a fun bike: such a torque monster! That there is one happy *Moving Violation*.



It's true: girls just love to shop, and when a sale is found *do not* get in the way.

