

THE THIRD *MOVING VIOLATIONS* CUSTOM TOUR. 09/03 & 09-04 2023

No photos! Not sure if I lost them or never took them. Maybe some were sent to me, and I deleted them. Maybe none were ever taken or sent. I will at any rate try to capture the flavor of this great ride weekend with words.....

WOW, I really like riding with this group. Peg is a dear old friend of 40+ years; a former fellow road racer and an active member in a women's riding club: The Moving Violations. I had done several very memorable tours with this group before, and every club member is a dedicated and competent motorcyclist. Peg 'herded the cats' for me by recruiting 6 other club members, so there were 7 riders, until a last minute cancellation brought us down to a group of 6:

Peg Preble, MA
 Kristin Von Donop, ME
 Julia Lee, MA
 Mia Fabrizio, PA
 KP Pxxxxxx, NY
 Joel Samick, PA

Bikes chosen were:

1973 Yamaha TX750; 14,746 miles
 1976 Honda GL1000; 17,440 miles
 1976 Yamaha RD400; 42,238 miles
 1976 Honda CB500T; 32,713 miles
 1977 Yamaha XS750; 27,213 miles
 1983 Suzuki GS550ES; 8,051 miles

One unique aspect of this ride was that women began arriving the day before. A few opted to stay in the house but most camped in the field out back. In the morning, the field resembled a military camp as the mist lifted off the pond and sleepy riders began to emerge from their canvas cocoons, searching for hot coffee. As usual, we breakfasted together, got acquainted, and had our riders' meeting. I collected forms and payments and explained our 'loose group' riding strategy. I emphasized that we would NOT be riding in a close formation, as is the norm at Moving Violations group rides. If I remember correctly, their motto is: "Tight and Slow". But on strange bikes, 'tight' is not necessarily the best strategy: a margin is needed to allow for missed shifts or unsmooth braking as riders acclimate. As far as 'slow' goes, I can assure you that our pace was more than respectable.

We begin our 2-day adventure by following the Brandywine River north. At Downingtown we pick up the Brandywine Creek East Branch and follow that to a short break at a coffee shop next to a tiny church. Rivers and creeks meander as they wind through the rolling hills and valleys of Eastern, PA. In addition to supplying reliable water power to small colonial industries, rivers and creeks were the primary travel routes in those early days, and roadways soon evolved to follow their twisting paths. Once the freeways and straight-as-an arrow major arteries were built, the old river roads were largely abandoned by traffic, leaving fascinating opportunities for motorcyclists like us. Freshly paved and bucolic, Route 282/345 seems to marry "A River Runs Through It" to "On Any Sunday". At the coffee shop, sprits are running high, and a quick tour of "The World's Smallest Church" always delights.

We continue north to Douglassville, then cross the Schuylkill River to pick up 622 north through

Fleetwood. At Moselem Springs (the name derives from the indigenous peoples' word for trout), home of a Health Center based on an historic inn from the mid 1800's, we pick up 143, and began to follow Maiden Creek. Many tight curves later and we cross the creek over the recently restored, historic Dreibelbis Covered Bridge. Finally, from Lynnport, we ascend the high escarpment that is the Eastern Continental Divide, then stop at the 100 mile mark in Snyders, PA for gas and lunch. From here it is a short ride of 35 or 40 miles to Ashland, where we visit the Pioneer Coal Tunnel. Once the PA coal mines were the energy producing center of the nation. Now, pretty much the only locals that still work in the mines are the guides. We descend into this mother lode on a tiny electric train with absolutely no suspension. We are jarred and jostled all the way down, feeling somewhat like the dwarfs from Snow White: "HI HO, Hi Ho, it's off to work we go...". Our guide uses corny humor to explain how coal mining was done, which includes child labor, mules who lived out their lives underground, and canary methane detectors.

Our next stop is Centralia, a ghost town where the coal vein touches the surface right under the old town dump. The coal vein was accidentally set on fire in the 1960's and is still burning. None of the efforts to extinguish it were ever successful, and the large-ish town had to be evacuated and permanently vacated. The major roadway through town was diverted when it began to melt. We explore a bit of the ruins, then find our way to Fallen Timbers: an old, remote farmhouse in Elysburg where we plan to spend the night. The layout is early rural American, with a tiny kitchen, 3 bedrooms upstairs, and a good sized yard with an excellent fire pit waiting for us. First though, we claim our bedrooms and plan what to do for dinner. A little research reveals that the Pondeuce Farms Restaurant is just a few miles away, and a straight shot down the country road (White Church Road) that begins across the street. Their apt motto: "Thanks for joining us in the middle of nowhere." But they close at 7...we need to move out! The food is decent and the atmosphere unique. Back at the farmhouse the fire pit is lit, and we sit around the fire, enjoying the quiet and the company of like-minded individuals.

In the morning, coffee is made and consumed. It turns out that my favorite breakfast restaurant from years past did not make it through Covid, so we meander a bit through the farm lands, then enter a small town with a popular looking breakfast restaurant. Maybe too popular since we have to wait an hour to be served. Still, the food is decent, and we are sitting at an outside table, watching the world go by. Slowly, very slowly. Back in the saddle, we enjoy more country roads leading us to Bill's Old Bike Barn. In the past, Bill would follow a small group like ours around and talk about the bikes and other collectables on display. But Bill has gone digital: for a small extra fee we rent electronic devices that talk us through the displays. It's a recording of Bill's voice, so in one sense it's a lot like a personal guided tour, but in another sense, it is a too efficient de-personalization of a much loved tradition. Such is the high tech world we live in. I guess there is no going back.

After an hour and a half in the Old Bike Barn we follow the Susquehanna a bit then turn south. Riding through dormant coal fields, we soon reach Shamokin, where a quick stop at Dunkin's lets us refresh before attacking Route 125, a highly technical 2-lane that crosses over 2 mountains before terminating in the town of Ravine. Another 100 miles or so through Amish country towns like Schaefferstown and Compass brings us back to Kennett Square, where a hot meal and soft beds (or tents) await. The bikes have performed well. Everyone rode well. Tomorrow, the riders will hop on their own bikes or into their 4 wheelers for the trip home. I have made some new friends and it has been an enjoyable weekend all around. Hopefully a 4th Moving Violations Tour will happen soon. **PEG AND MIA SENT SOME PHOTOS!**
THANKS TO BOTH! SEE NEXT PAGE, AND FOR FULL COVERAGE COPY & PASTE TO YOUR SEARCH BAR:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-NFmwgQD-p-v4nnKxQirSM7MWwdVad76>



Left to right: KP, Kristin, Julia, Peg, Mia