

Moonshine Lunch Run – April 12th – 14th, 2013

Plans were made, bags were packed and then ... the unexpected. When Friday came, the weather forecast mentioned snow flurries, work had me at home on the computer – Vernon called, very tired and told me he wasn't riding down on Friday, I told him to hook-up with Tim Gron and meet us at the Days Inn in Mattoon on Saturday. Last minute work constraints ended up making poor John Lazarz wait around an hour. When we FINALLY loaded up and headed out – Alex's '96 Honda Shadow ACE literally died in the driveway – battery was DOD (dead on departure)...so Alex had to decide ride 2-up or stay at home with the dogs...hmm, 2-up in the cold and light rain? --- The puppies were reportedly quite happy about the extra treats from Alex.

John and I made it to the Cracker Barrel for dinner and then we drove the cool-way down to Mattoon...I was so happy to check into the Days Inn – my right foot was going numb – which seemed odd to me that my left foot was fine (John mentioned the wind was from the southwest-west direction). John's first decent run on his Honda NT-700VA managed just fine with the wind gusts and Mark's increasing throttle "un-control" as we got closer to Mattoon. Checked in and I went fast asleep, John checked out the local Buffalo Wild Wings. As John was speaking with the bartender he was told that the place is normally more crowded ... John mentioned that their lights were off and he wasn't sure if they were open ... a moment of silence and then the bartender went over to flick on the outside light switches. Then John got some odd calls to his work cell phone from a hospital in Chicago ...(he has two children who live in the city and no doubt this was troubling) ... John left voice mail and text messages – finally a response from his son at 3am – "lol – ok" - (perhaps his son has to pay by the letter on each text message)...I asked to meet-up at 7:30 – John set his room clock and it went off at 7:15 – hopped out of bed and outside to the bikes in less than 15 minutes ...darn – it's dark and quiet ... actual time was 4:30 am... I hate to think what I would have said if it were me.

Anyway, John and I met for breakfast & coffee at 7:30 and then set off to Charleston – stopped at the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Museum at 8 – closed – opens after 10 – the Charleston debate was the 4th of their seven open debates they agreed upon. The debate format was one speaking for an hour, followed by the other for an hour and-a-half, with the original speaker getting in a 30-minute rebuttal. Stephan Douglas was the current US Senator for Illinois (Democrat) versus Abraham Lincoln (Republican) – the Illinois Statehouse Representatives would eventually vote and select Douglas as the US Senator for Illinois. To me, the debates foreshadowed the coming Civil War and the issue was about slavery, plain and simple.

Now we rode over to Casey, IL – went to the Moonshine Lunch Run headquarters, the number and types of bikes were impressive. Grabbed some coffee, cinnamon rolls and our Moonshine Lunch Run T-shirt (nice one this year) ... talked to some of the Iron Butt Riders (Tom Yau and George from Arizona – George rode 1685 miles in under 26 hours and is over 70 years young). I wish I had that kind of endurance.

After a while, John and I rode over to Moonshine – crossroads of 600E and 300N or is it 600N and 300E ... never mind – just watch for and follow the motorcycles – can't miss it – well you can – but just watch for the motorcycles parked ½ mile in all directions to the place. (Received a

call from Vernon, he wasn't going to be able to make it – slept in too long – supposedly there was a hail storm in the morning hours – which made me happy that I rode down the previous night – next year Vernon ... you're going). The Moonburger was excellent (I like mine with bacon – but you have to go inside the store to get those)...sharing a meal with the other motorcyclists and talking is a treat. Caught up with Tim Gron and his pal Leon while they were in the Moonburger line (they also may have had bacon on theirs too). The major trouble this year – the Mennonites didn't have any homemade ice cream to sell (major bummer) – but did have pies, cookies and bread to sell – John had a laugh at me for buying a Cherry pie – but it was great and had me thankful for the ample space in the trunk of the Goldwing.

John and I had time to kill before the Casey Firefighter Chili dinner at 5:30 – so we went back to Charleston to the one-room Debate Museum (free) – my needs were met – picked up some interesting things to see and do in the area – rode down to Effingham – Corvette & air-cooled Volkswagen museum (Mid-America) – very decent and free! Rode Highway 40 back to Casey – from the highway noticed a wooden covered bridge. The Casey Firefighter Chili dinner and talking with the other Moonshine riders was a major highlight of the day. Afterward it was still light out – so we rode back on Hwy 40 – got onto the “old highway road” and checked out the covered bridge (free!). There's quite a bit of history on the bridge crossing and reconstruction of the bridge (supposedly Abraham Lincoln and his father had worked on the original covered wooden bridge). It was dark when we got back to Mattoon, John said he had a great day and I did too – although next year I will plan more and expect to see more of the area. Ideally I want to attend the Friday evening riders' dinner & gathering. The town of Casey sure enjoys having us riders visit – they actually look forward to our gathering as a sure sign that Spring has arrived.

Sunday morning we met up and rode home on I-57, weather was sweet (approaching 60 degrees) and not raining. Total miles was 635 with all my “short-cuts” and “Hey, let's check this museum out”...

Mark “Free”

