

EVA News Brief

June 2008

A note from the Editor

Stan Jankowski

Having recently missed an issue of this newsletter I thought I'd start out a quick note to all my fellow EVAers to say sorry. Some computer issues and some personal ones have kept me otherwise occupied. Even this issue will be brief, but does have some good content from a fine contributor. I hope to get things back on track and start producing the kind of newsletter you all deserve.

Stan

A note from the President

Greetings to all in Enchanted Voyagers land

Well, this year seems to be going well. We have two events under our belt already.

The quarterly lunch went well. We had 10 people on 8 bikes. Then after we finished eating, Paul Weser from Las Cruces made it after some battery problems that morning. We had great eats and I know I had a great ride there and back. And of course the best part a great bunch of people to talk with. We decided to make our next lunch at the Buckhorn Tavern in San Antonio. It will be on June 21st at noon. WhiskeyDoc asked about riding thru the range to get to San Antonio for us from the Alamogordo area. I contacted the person at WSMR in charge of this and was informed they do not 'condone' that. It would have been nice though. I look forward to meeting yall there.

As a side benefit to this, WhiskeyDoc brought along two friends Bobby Armstrong and Mac McIntosh. They have both since joined the Enchanted Voyagers. Bobby is from Alamogordo and rides a 2001 XII. Mac is from Tularosa and also rides a 2001 XII. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome both of you to the Enchanted Voyagers. I also look forward to seeing you both on more of our rides. I really enjoyed talking with both of you at the quarterly lunch in Capitan.

Last week we had our joint event with the Lone Star Voyagers, the Spring Fun Run. We had two days of great weather for rides to the Big Bend National Park. I really liked the ride to Santa Elena Canyon. They had a beautiful path into the canyon. I have a separate article elsewhere in this newsletter.

This past Friday I rode over to the Arizona Bike Week in Scottsdale. I rode there via Emory Pass and then into Silver City. From there rode up past Cliff and took 78 to Three Way in Arizona. Both of these are great rides. Anyhow, while in Silver City I talked to the people at the Copper Manor hotel and the Silver City RV Park about rates. I have that info on the web site. I will put more info about the rides soon as well as the registration form.

Do you have your registration in for the AVA rally inBGK? Do you have your reservations for lodging there? If not, get it in soon. We would like to have a great turnout from the Enchanted Voyagers.

I should have the registration for the Enchanted Tour on our web site by the time this goes out, so don't delay getting that in as well as making lodging reservations. We will have some great rides. The weather in Silver City should be great that time of year.

One last thing. If you haven't gotten your Enchanted Voyagers renewal in, get it in now. We have 5 members (three families) from last year that have not renewed yet. The end of April I will remove those who have not renewed from our roster.

See ya on the road.

Rod Westphal

Rolling Thunder

By David "Whiskey Doc" Rupp

I have been riding motorcycles since I was thirteen years old. I have ridden many miles around towns, across the desert as a young man and more recently I have taken several trips on the open road. As I am approaching my 62nd birthday I decided it was time to take a really long distance motorcycle trip and do something that would be very memorable. Back in January of 2008 I decided that it was time to ride to the 21st anniversary of the Rolling Thunder Rally in Washington, DC.

Rolling Thunder is an annual motorcycle rally that is held during the Memorial Day weekend to call for the government's recognition and protection of Prisoners of War (POWs) and those Missing in Action (MIAs). This year the crowd of veterans riding their motorcycles was estimated at nearly 400,000.

I left New Mexico for my ride to DC on May 13th taking a route south on US 54 through El Paso, TX. The distance is further this way, but riding over the Sacramento Mountains on Hwy 82 at first light is much slower and much more dangerous. The morning sun hits you directly in the eyes and early mornings on the mountain are always a bad time for deer and other woodland creatures to be on the highways. Deer and motorcycles do not mix and there are no "fender benders" in a motorcycle/deer collision!

My plan for the first day was to reach my oldest daughter's home in Granbury, TX, a distance of approximately 600 plus miles. The route was mostly on freeways and I was able to make excellent time. The weather was clear and warm with mild winds. Later on during the trip I would look back and truly appreciate this nice weather.

I arrived in Granbury late in the afternoon, but in time to go with my granddaughter Teresa and her Dad to a dance practice. Teresa's class and the girls dad's were all preparing for a father/daughter dance during the next recital. I felt a real sense of pride as I watched my son-in-law dancing with his little girl!

I spent the night with my daughter and her family only to awaken to a major thunderstorm moving through the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. I'll decided to relax for awhile, have a second cup of coffee and leave for Atlanta a little later in the day. The weather forecast showed the main line of storms being south of my line of travel by later in the morning.

The weather began to clear by 9:30 or so in the morning on the 14th and so I headed out for points east. Once on the road the weather was overcast most of the way out of Texas and through Louisiana. I only made a total of 450 miles on Wednesday due to my later start and the longer day of riding the day before. Some days on a motorcycle just seem more difficult than others and I don't like to "push myself" when I'm on vacation. I finally gave it up in Vicksburg, MS after staying ahead of the storm all day.

I found a room at a Days Inn. The hotel promised "free internet" but unfortunately the signal was so weak it didn't work. I just watched the news after dinner and got some rest.

In the morning I checked the weather report before leaving. There was a tornado warning in effect for Mississippi north of Vicksburg and of course rain for most of the day was predicted.

I decided to get moving and see if I could stay out in front of the storm and so I left Vicksburg at 5:30 am. I guess the weather man was wrong because I seemed to ride right into the storm and within twenty minutes of leaving I was caught in a rain of Biblical proportions! The rain was so bad it took me until after noon to ride a full 100 miles! I also learned during that morning that my rain jacket wasn't really a rain jacket and my gloves weren't waterproof!

A quick stop at a WalMart solved both problems. Shortly after that the rain slowed to a sprinkle and I made it all the way to Tuscaloosa, AL with no more serious rain. The rain stayed down most of the rest of today and I finally stopped at a Motel 6 in Anniston-Oxford, AL, about 90 miles east of Atlanta.

I was then only about 400 miles from Charleston, SC and I figured I could make that the next day as there was no rain in the forecast!

The trip to this point had been lots of fun. It was also educational in that you learn many things about long distance motorcycle travel, preparation, and changing the way you approach getting from point "A" to point "B". In a car, you just go, on a motorcycle you have to slow down, relax and not be in a hurry. The one hundred miles in five hours I had made trying to ride in a driving rain is a case in point. I could have stayed in the hotel until 11:00 o'clock and then traveled the same one hundred miles by 1:00 PM! In any case it is good to still be learning new things and new skills. I was enjoying my 2nd childhood!

As I was preparing to leave Oxford, AL I discovered that I did not have a headlight. I checked the bulb and the fuse, but both were fine. I went ahead and left for Charleston since I wasn't going to be driving at night and if I was stopped (SC is a day time head light state) I just explain the problem and get it fixed when I got to my son's home.

I arrived in Charleston, SC on Friday afternoon. The trip from Oxford, AL to Atlanta, GA was not bad. Traffic going through Atlanta was a little thick for my liking, but I-20 straight through was the best route since big trucks are prohibited from using I-20 through Atlanta. The big rigs all use the north/south relief routes around downtown Atlanta.

There was no rain, but a very nice cool overcast for most of the day which made the ride comfortable. Folks often ask me why I enjoy riding a motorcycle and one of the reasons is the full sensation of the trip. Riding on the freeway through Georgia reminded me of this fact. Even on a busy highway you can smell the scent of gardenias and honeysuckle coming from the roadside woods. That combined with the clean smell from after a rain made for a very sweet ride.

When I reached the east side of Augusta, GA I decided it was time to leave the freeway and take the back road into Charleston. I got onto Hwy 78 at Aiken, SC for the rest of the ride. Really beautiful "old south" like you have imagined or seen in magazines. Large pretty homes, also some mobiles, nice small towns without any of the "big box" stores of larger towns. Slower pace, nice schools and lots of churches!

Near the end of the road to Charleston, just north of a very small town called Jedburg, I ran into a little rain shower and as luck would have it (or as the Lord planned it!) I saw a small grocery store with an awning over the front that would protect me and the bike from the rain for a few minutes. I stopped, parked and went inside to make a purchase.

The owner was a very nice, heavy set, middle aged black woman who had owned the store since her husband's death some 17 years prior. We chatted for about twenty minutes or so until the rain quit. I learned she was from Mobile, AL and later moved to New York City where she met her husband. He was from SC and moved her to the store and then several years later he passed away. She didn't have any reason to pick up and leave South Carolina so she stayed there running the store and making a life for herself.

We visited about growing up in another era and how today's children have missed out on some of the many wonderful experiences of our youth like living on a farm and learning old time skills. Guess that is what older folks do; in every generation I'm sure! When the rain had stopped, it was time to move on.

I was only thirty more miles or so from Charleston. It was early enough in the day that I was able to ride around to Mt. Pleasant where my son works and meet his co-workers before we heading to Ben's house on James Island.

It was now Friday May 17th and the day began just as I had expected. My son had a "list" of things he needed help with around the house. So in addition to finding and trying to fix the problem with the headlight on the bike and making some minor adjustments, I was tearing into the lawnmower, looking over the power steering pump on Ben's car and planning how to finish the rest of his list before I had to leave! Good to know old Dad can still be useful!

On Saturday my grandson and I went to a Pirate Festival down near the waterfront. Great fun! Reminded me of when Ben, my son, was young and belonged to a "mountain man" group in Cloudcroft, NM. The pirate hobbyists had set up a "pirate camp" and there they showed off skills used by old time pirates from Charleston's history. When you are in Charleston you sometimes need to remind yourself that the city was there long before and during the Revolutionary War as well as the Civil War.

On Tuesday after school I rode up to Mt. Pleasant and picked up my grandson from school so we could ride up to Summerville and meet up with a friend from the Palmetto Voyagers. Dave is an "electrical guru" when it comes to Voyager wiring problems and he was going to help me with the head light problem. With the help of Carl Leo we had managed a temporary fix by "bridging" the head light relay.

Ayden and I took the back roads from his school up Highway 41 toward Huger and then over to Monck's Corner, SC. By the time we reached Monck's Corner there had been several severe storm/tornado warnings from NOAA over the radio. We could clearly see the line of bad weather moving from the northwest toward the coast.

When we got into Summerville the storm was advancing in our direction at nearly fifty miles per hour so I made a quick call to Dave letting him know we were heading back home immediately! We took I-26 and stayed ahead of the bad weather getting back to James Island thirty minutes before the storm hit.

That evening on the news we learned that within about 15 minutes of our leaving Summerville, the area was hit with golf ball sized hail stones and torrential rains! Needless to say the head light would have to wait. I enjoyed the reminder of my time with Ben and Ayden in Charleston.

I had a wonderful visit with my son and grandson in Charleston. Charleston, SC is such a wonderful place, especially in the spring. Last time I was there was in the late summer and early fall the heat was miserable. Really great this trip!

Well after being over fed with southern bar-b-q, lots of fresh fish, and fresh picked strawberries (they are in season in Charleston!) I left early and headed to Washington, DC. Very nice ride up I-95. Much nicer ride than I'd been lead to expect from those who travel on this main north/south interstate between Miami and New York City. Weather was clear and cool and the traffic was not too heavy.

I did get a laugh out of my inexperience with a GPS device. I didn't hook up the GPS when I started out from Charleston since I knew the general direction I was going. I rode up I-26 and then I-95 for about 275 miles when I decided I'd give the GPS a try. I hooked it up, brought up my friends address in Springfield, VA and told it to take me there. (Pretty cool when you think about that!)

I took off and about 40 miles down the road I looked at the GPS to see how much further I had to go and it said "498 miles". I knew from my "old hand held" GPS, a map, that the whole trip was only 535 miles so I was not happy and more than a little confused!

Later on I passed an exit the GPS was telling me I needed to take. When I looked down again it had recalculated the route and now it was telling me I only had another 365 miles to go! That is when I realized I had set the thing to find the "scenic route" for a ride a day or two earlier with my grandson! At my next gas stop I fixed the problem and discovered I only had 200 more miles to travel. It brought me directly to my friend's house in a city I'd never visited previously. Wonderful technology!

I stayed with an old friend from law school who lives in Springfield, VA just south of DC. Scott has been in the Army for 34 years and he is now the Staff Judge Advocate General of the Army. I was thinking as we talked the evening I was there how far Scotty had come from that first day I met him shooting pool in law school! Still just as good a friend as anyone could ever want. I am truly blessed!

Scott and his wife Kim had to head off later on Friday for a conference of retired JAG Officer's in Atlanta, but they invited me to make myself at home until I meet my friends on Saturday afternoon at Andrews AFB, in Maryland. I spent the remainder of Friday just relaxing at Kim and Scott's house.

I left Springfield on Saturday morning to meet friends coming from New Mexico at Andrews AFB in Maryland. Gary and Mike are friends from church and the CMA Chapter in Alamogordo, NM. Mike has been to Rolling Thunder on six previous occasions so he was to be our "guide".

I met Gary at Andrews late n Saturday afternoon and then we got settled into the Navy Gateway Inn at Andrews AFB. Gary is retired Air Force and Mike is retired Army. Gary vouched for me to get onto the base.

The rooms at the Gateway Inn on the base were very nice and only cost \$40.00 a night. Can't complain about that at all, especially in the Washington, DC area. After getting settled into our rooms and meeting up with Mike and several of his friends we headed into downtown Washington to see the Vietnam Memorial and get a feeling for the "big" event on Sunday. Short visit in "Thunder Alley", a place for all the vendors selling motorcycle gear and Rolling Thunder T-shirts, patches, etc. Truly enjoyed the freedom to park on the grass between the streets and sidewalks as there is simply not enough space for 400,000 motorcycles anywhere else!

Today, Sunday May 25th was the primary reason for my three week motorcycle trip to the east coast from Alamogordo, NM. We were up early on Sunday morning and headed out for the north Pentagon parking lot by 7 am. We had plans to stop and eat on the way, but both fast food places we stopped at were not open inside due to a lack of employees making it to work on time! Now what do you do when most of a whole crew is so late you can't open? This was a new one on me and more than a little discouraging as a comment on younger workers for an old man like me!

We passed on having breakfast and headed on into Washington. One of the conundrums of Rolling Thunder is do you get to the parking lot there early and wait for the Parade to begin at noon or do you get there late and wait around to leave the parking lot until nearly 4 in the afternoon! Mike, having been there six previous times, suggested the early arrival. I think he was right. It was cooler in the morning while we waited, the lines for food and T-shirts weren't as long and the wait to use a port-a-potty was not unbearable!

During our wait there were lots of Christian Motorcycle Association members all around the lot handing out cold water, tracts, and Hope for the Highway Bibles. Other Christian Bikers were also busy handing out Bibles and offering to help all who needed any help.

The bikes began moving out for the parade around the National Mall right at noon. We only had to wait until around 12:50 pm to leave the lot. It is hard to imagine how 400,000 motorcycles and nearly twice as many veterans and friends all get moving in the same direction. It takes hours and hours, but the response of the people watching made it all worthwhile! Really a very special day and experience.

After Mike, Gary and I had ridden the parade route Mike and Gary walked around the reflecting pool from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Memorial and back. I stayed near the Lincoln Memorial and listened to the speakers and the parents of missing soldiers and Marines. Gary and Mike visited the Wall for a second time, the Korean Memorial and the new WWII Memorial. All in all it was a very moving experience for all of us.

On the way back to the motel we stumbled upon a sea food place just a few miles from the base with great food, great prices and very nice owners. A perfect way to end the day!

Monday morning we began our trip back to New Mexico. I quickly realized that Mike and Gary had very similar riding styles and my "solo, take it easy style" didn't fit with what worked for them. After the first day we sort of agreed to stay in touch if possible and if not then it was no big deal.

I don't guess I have ever been a big fan of "group rides" and on this trip I learned the reason it is so difficult! People who ride motorcycles are generally very independent sorts at best. If they followed the "crowd" they'd all be in nice safe cages like the rest of the motorists on the road. Riding with a group of 3 or 4 riders is like trying to drive a car with 3 or 4 drivers all having their own sets of controls! Not the best way to move at the same time, in the same direction, and with the same purpose. This was a very good lesson to learn and we are all still great friends.

The trip home was fine with the exception of some rain, a threat of tornados from time to time and several long days. By the time I reached home I was not ready to ride again for a long time, but by the next morning I was planning a new trip and looking forward to the next rally.

A note from Stan

Helen and I were told by the boss that there will be no July vacation, so, we will not be going to Bowling Green for this year's National Rally. We've been able to put together a short notice trip that includes business and pleasure. After a stop in Denver for some business we are planning to head northwest to spend a few days at Yellowstone. I'll fill you all in the next newsletter.

In the mean time ride safe, enjoy life and keep an eye on the forums (EVA, LSV, and AVA) for all the latest news and chatter.

Another note from Rod

Since I wrote the last letter for this newsletter a few new things have happened. We have two new members, Roland and Verla Caster from Carrizozo. They bought Don McMorris' old XII. I haven't met them yet, but hope to soon.

We will be having our quarterly lunch in San Antonio this Saturday. We have several members going. It will be a little warm as the temps have been getting up over 100 the past week and will keep that up. We have ordered new Enchanted Voyagers shirts which I will be bringing along to the lunch. They have the Enchanted Voyagers logo on the front and the image of the patch WhiskeyDoc designed on the back. I think they look rather nice. WhiskeyDoc did an excellent job on the design. Thank you!!

Guess I had better quit this for now and get it out to the members and on the web page.

Yall have a great summer and I hope to see ya at BGK!!

Rod Westphal