



Spoke 'N Word

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Newsletter of the Potomac Area Road Riders

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There's That Old Feeling

Did you feel it? I did! It happened just a few days ago. There was no mistaking it. I was going about my usual summertime activities when all of a sudden, it appeared out of nowhere. It was here! September!

I (like many other motorcyclists, I'm sure) can feel the change in the air when September 1st rolls around. It's a bit hard to describe, but it's there. The end of the summer riding season. The faint sadness of bidding farewell to the memorable summer overnight rides and the warm evenings of riding just before the sunset. But on the upside: the impending Autumn and the cool, colorful riding season just ahead.

I have a favorite place I like to ride to when this time of the year comes around. For me, it's a place for reflecting; a place for looking back on the great summer riding season; to ponder what lies ahead and to think about what rides I'd like to do in the future. It's a place that is special to me. And it's always a solo ride.

So did you feel it? It's actually a great feeling all-in-all. Get ready to enjoy the fall!

Mike

October Sunday Ride Graves Mountain Lodge

We tried to do this ride on Labor Day weekend, but because so many of you were busy with family and/or end-of-summer activities, we had to postpone it one more time. The ride is now scheduled for the first Sunday in October.

Graves Mountain Lodge is nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Syria, Virginia near Old Rag Mountain. This family-owned and operated rustic retreat (in business for 135 years) is known for its down home hospitality, not to mention all the home cooked food you can eat and unrivaled natural beauty of the area.

The ride will begin at the IHOP in Ashburn, VA located near the intersection of Ashburn Village Blvd and Farmwell Road. The ride will leave this location at 9:30. Riders can still take advantage of the buffet breakfast at our normal Sunday Ride meeting location at the Masonic Lodge in McLean, VA. Breakfast there begins at 8:00 and riders need to leave McLean promptly at 9:00 for the ride to Ashburn.

Cost of the fried chicken buffet at Graves is \$16.75 per person plus tax and gratuity. The buffet also includes beverages and dessert.

Reservations are needed. If you plan to attend, contact Mike at 703-963-1860.

Upcoming Overnight Rides

It's now September and if you missed out on our spectacular summer multi-day tours, you still have two more chances to join in on some great touring rides. Here's what lies ahead:

September 18-20 Lancaster, PA Covered Bridge Tour

We'll be enjoying a short ride to a long-ago world — the Amish countryside of Lancaster which will include rides across covered bridges and Amish buffets. Please note that the dates for this tour have been moved to a later week in September. Contact Mike Wascak at smichaelwascak@aol.com

October 10-11 Fall Foliage Tour thru the Piedmonts

Enjoy a ride south into the Piedmonts where we'll admire the beautiful reds, yellows, purples and greens of the change of season in our area.

Contact Tom Southard at tsouthard@verizon.net

Do you have a good idea for an overnight ride or would like to create one and lead it? Now's the time to start thinking about it. PARR will be putting together the list of Overnight Rides for 2010 in a few short months. Contact any one of the PARR officers for details.

Fall Foliage Day Ride

Mark your calendar now for the Annual PARR Fall Foliage Day Ride which is scheduled for Sunday, October 18th. If rain is forecast for that day, the ride will be postponed until the following Sunday, October 25th. The starting location will be announced next month in the October issue of the **SPOKE** and in the PARR website. The route will be around 150 miles in length and will also include a ride across Whites Ferry. A PARR Poker Run Route from yesteryear will be used. It's a good one! Don't miss the perfect time of the year for riding a great route. For further info, contact Mike Wascak at 703-963-1860.

PARR MEETINGS AND RIDES

Monthly Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month

Location: JCC 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA.

Note: Go to front desk to sign in and you will be directed to the location of the meeting room. Meeting time is 7:30 pm

1st Sunday Ride: Breakfast Buffet between 8-9:00

Location: Masonic Lodge 999 Balls Hill Rd
McLean, Virginia

3rd Saturday Ride: Meet for Coffee at Starbucks at 9:00

Location: Colonnade Shopping Center
5722 Union Mills Road, Cifton, VA

Contact Info: PARR President, Ed Bugash
Phone: 301-948-1014

West Virginia Tour — August 2009 Ride Report — by Paul Flynn

John Denver had it right. From a road rider's viewpoint our West Virginia ride was "almost heaven".

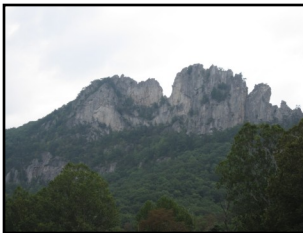
After abandoning our Saturday start, due to forecasted downpours (which materialized), eight bikes and ten riders enjoyed perfect weather for two days of fantastic Virginia and West Virginia winding, twisting and rolling roads, and spectacular panoramic valley views.

From our starting point in Haymarket, we rolled down Routes 29 and 211 toward New Market, warming the tires on the switchbacks as we took on our first two climbs through the mountains. We then headed south on rolling Virginia country roads through Bridgewater before heading west into the George Washington National Forest and our first real twisties as we crossed the Shenandoah Mountains into McDowell, VA.

South from McDowell, we rolled down Rt. 687, an absolutely beautiful valley road that followed the scenic Bullpasture River (really!). Rock formations on the right; babbling river on the left. This road was a "keeper". One of the most enjoyable features of this road (as well as many of the others we rode) was the fact that we had it almost completely to ourselves.

We then headed west through the GW and Monongahela National Forests into Marlinton, WV. Our lunch was at the Greenbrier Grill, on their porch overlooking the Greenbrier River, where paddling ducks and humans entertained us. Good food, but if you want to go lite with just a loaded baked potato, bring a friend!

Well fed, we headed northwest to check out the Cass historical area. Our route took us through the Snowshoe Ski Resort area and on easy rolling roads through the Black Allegheny Mountains. Cass features a restored 1902 company town with a unique railroad that hauled lumber from Bald Knob, the 3rd highest peak in WV, to the mill in Cass. We passed on the train ride, but did get to catch the arrival and departure of the restored coal-driven steam Shay



locomotive.

From Cass, we rode through more state parks and rolling roads toward our stop for the evening in Monterey, VA. Crossing back into Virginia, we offered special thanks to VDH for the only snag in near-perfect selection of roads conditions. As late afternoon light started to wane, we encountered about 5 miles of "Gravel In Road", newly-patched twisties. No real problems, but it took the fun out of those mountain turns.

The Highland Inn in Monterey was exceptional. The 1904 Inn sits on the main, but very, very quiet street in Monterey. While the room décor - very nice and quaint - would indicate otherwise, everyone (us and two other parties) at the Inn Sunday night arrived on motorcycles. The hotel's dining room was closed on Sunday and the only option on a Sunday night in Monterey, the Mountain Hideaway, was modest, but it did fill the bill after a great riding day. Dinner was followed by a relaxed evening on the second story porch of the Inn -- chatting, having a few beers and watching the local cats patrol the sidewalks of Monterey.

Monday weather looked good. Cool for August at the outset. We headed north through a rolling valley road then swung west onto Snowy Mountain Road through beautiful hilly farms that evidenced the fact that farmers in these parts actually breed cows with right legs longer than left so they can graze the steep hills (really!). Great scenery! Our first stop of the day was Seneca Rocks. It was still early to catch any daredevils scaling the peaks, although a couple showed up as we

were rolling out.

After swinging around the south end of Seneca Rocks National Park, we headed north through the park then up Rt. 220 along the South Branch of the Potomac River. Just past Upper Tract on US 220, we turned onto what was the treat of the two days of riding.

Smoke Hole Road (CR2), which cuts through the park, is a really great motorcycling road. After following a creek through a steep gorge for several miles, the road climbs and then tracks the ins and outs of the side of North Fork Mountain, with switchback after switchback -- way past counting. The spectacular views into the gorge and then across the valley below as the gorge opens are best left to back-seaters, since the turns are back-to-back and take your full attention. The narrow but well-maintained and (thankfully) sparsely-traveled road runs about twenty miles before ending on Rt. 28/55 near Petersburg WV. This road was a lot of fun!

Lunch Monday was at O'Neills in Moorefield, WV. Good food and portions, and a variety of homemade desserts. The curb appeal belies the food quality.

Heading home after lunch, we selected "old" Rt. 55. Old 55 was not well marked. The signs are biased to "new" Rt. 55, a beautiful super-slab, one of Sen. Robert C. Byrd's many federally-funded contributions to West Virginia -- but Old 55 was more to our liking. With a few adjustments, we rolled through the sweepers of Old 55 through Strasburg and Front Royal to our end point in Haymarket and a little well-deserved soft-serve ice cream to cap off two days of really great (even "heavenly") riding.