

Another One Under My Belt

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This year the Ride-In was held in Athens, GA. Can't remember if this was my 17th or 18th Ride-In, I missed one or two because of work when I was with the Railroad and I wasn't a member of Women On Wheels® for the first Ride-In. I look forward to the Ride-In every year. For me the Ride-In isn't just the event itself, but the adventure of riding to a new place. Before Women On Wheels® my vacations were spent at home doing nothing. This may have been cheaper, but not as much fun.

This year I rode with a great group of people to Georgia. There were first timers Sylvia Rivera, another member of WOW, Robert Overbaugh, WOW support member, and Terry Roberts, a friend of Sylvia and Robert's. Sylvia made the trip in her van and the boys both were on Harleys. I was the odd woman out on a Kawasaki.

In years past we had to be on the road by 6 or 6:30 AM at the latest, but this year I was able to sleep in because we didn't hit the road until about 8 AM. People were worried about my motorcycle being able to make the long trip, but before we could even start that first morning it wasn't me with the problem. The lead vehicle had a dead battery and had to be jump-started.

Once on the road the first to leave the curb set the pace and it was up to me to keep up if I wanted to ride with the group. From time to time I would get to looking around and I would fall a little behind so I would have to pedal a little faster to catch up, but I tried not to let this happen too often. It was nice not having to worry about anyone other than myself for a change.

Can't remember the last time the Ride-In was out east that I didn't get drenched. If it wasn't on the way to, it was on the way home, if not both. But that's what rain suits are for, aren't they? This year it was on the way to. We were just north of Atlanta when bad weather came out of nowhere. The wind started blowing debris, rain was coming down hard, and Sylvia knew she had to get us off of the highway. As we made our way to the first exit we had to pass a semi and I remember thinking that I hoped the wind didn't blow it over on us. Then coming to the end of the exit the lights were out, cars were stalled and I was having trouble seeing because of the rain on my windshield, helmet shield, and sunglasses. But Sylvia was able to get us to a grocery store parking lot. I was trying to hold my bike up while Terry was trying to hold on to his windshield, which had come off and hold up his motorcycle. Once we parked our motorcycles we made our way up to an over hang of the grocery store where we stood out the weather. Because of the power being out we couldn't even go into the store.

Once the weather cleared up some, it was time to hit the road again and after chatting with a couple of locals we decided to find a gas station with electricity and try a back road. Things started out great, a nice two-lane road, but soon it turned into a four/six lane nightmare. After several miles of the stop and go traffic we made it back to the highway. On this last track I was beginning to think that the others were trying to leave me behind because there were four times when Sylvia and Terry made it through the intersection on the green, Robert on the yellow and I had to run a red light in order to not be left behind. 😊 Finally, after two days of riding, we made it to the hotel and were able to get a good night's rest before the Ride-In actually started.

This year was one of the hottest and wettest Ride-Ins I can remember. A few activities had to be canceled or changed because of the rain, but there were still rides to be taken, seminars to attend and lots of old friends to catch up with. Before the opening ceremonies the hotel hosted a barbecue that was postponed because of the rain. They were almost set up when it came down, and down hard (it found us from the day before 😊). Because of the rain and the heat, the opening ceremony required a lot of liquid refreshments. The next day was pretty much an open day where you could take a ride or tour the city. Thursday I spent most of the day going to seminars, and then there was the closing ceremony, which had to be moved because of the weather. After dinner and saying our good-byes it was time to get some sleep before we had to leave in the morning.

The guys wanted to make it home in one day because they had planned another trip right after the Ride-In and had commitments to attend to before they could get on the road again but Sylvia and I decided we would take two days to return. We probably could have made it in one, but why push ourselves if we didn't have to. The guys had to be up and on the road around 4 AM and we were able to sleep in until about 6 because we planned on starting our trip home around 7 AM. That Friday was a great day for riding. The weather wasn't that hot. It was cool enough that in the morning we saw a couple of fawns along the side of the highway. And for the most part the traffic wasn't that bad. It helped that Robert was calling Sylvia when they stopped and giving her the heads up on the traffic situation. That first day we made it about 650 miles stopping for the night on the west side of St Louis. After something to eat and a good night's sleep we crossed Missouri and were home shortly after noon.

Well that is another Ride-In under my belt. This year I covered 1951.1 miles, averaged 42.58 miles per gallon, didn't miss getting rained on and my motorcycle didn't need service once, not like some others. Now it is time to start making plans for 2007 Ride-In in Springfield, Missouri.