



Michigan Sport Touring Report

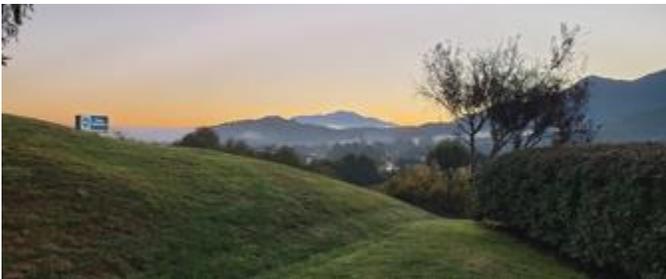
October 2021

Editor – Rachel Durling

MR2 Redo and Fall Colors Ride Wrap-ups

By: *Keith Danielson*

Each year, the Fall Colors Ride to Lewisburg, WV, has traditionally been our last out-of-state event of the riding season. This year was no exception, although we added a little twist this year by adding an MR2 Redo for the week preceding the Fall Colors Ride. This was for a couple of reasons, one being that due to inclement weather predictions, the Colonial Pipeline shutdown and one or two additional reasons, a fair number of riders elected to leave early or not come at all back in May; and the other reason being that people enjoy the venue and the riding so much that one week just isn't enough.



For MR2 Redo, the Best Western Smoky Mountain Inn in Waynesville, NC came through with our usual group rate and best-in-class hospitality for the week. Two couples elected to show up on Saturday so they could get an extra day of riding, with four more riders showing up on Sunday. While out on the Sunday ride, Jan Pennington found a rock the size of a soccer ball in the middle of the road in the first set of twisties that they came to on Wayah Road. In great consideration for all who would follow, she first broke the rock into multiple smaller pieces, and

then removed the rock. Unfortunately, as she struck the rock with the front wheel of her motorcycle to break it, it bent her front wheel enough to immediately let all of the air out of her front tire, and the bike had to be towed back to the hotel in a trailer. When I arrived at the hotel around 5:30, Don and Keith Harrison were valiantly attempting to straighten the front wheel. However, after doing all they could do, the wheel showed no less deformation from when they started, and Jan was relegated to driving around with Bobbi Harrison, shopping for the rest of the week.



Meanwhile, Keith Harrison, Don Pennington, Curt Vohlken, Andre Gardinalli, new member Joe Riss, and I (Keith 2) enjoyed three of some of the best consecutive weather days we have ever had in Waynesville, with low temps in the 50s and high temps in the 70s each day. On Monday, with a slight delay due to fog in the valley, our group of 6 riders set out on the Georgia Loops route. After a couple of opportunities to practice U-turns due to small navigational errors, we arrived in Helen Georgia at the International Café for lunch overlooking the Chattahoochee River.



With the riders all refueled, we continued to Suches, GA, where the motorcycles were again refueled, and we stopped in at the Two Wheels Only (TWO) motorcycle resort. TWO was closed, as they were only open on the weekends, so we didn't get to look around at all. As it was getting a little bit late, we decided to retrace our route back across Wolf Pen Gap and up to Highlands. After another gas stop in Highlands, our good fortunes with traffic ran out. First, as we were going down through the Cullasaja Gorge out of Highlands, we encountered what I'll call a lawn and garden tractor festival heading down the hill. It was several county mowing crews working their way down the hill, but the effect was the same – we were stuck behind a number of cars, none of which would pass the tractors, as we slowly worked our way down the hill at about 5 to 10 mph. When the tractors finally got to the end of their work area and pulled over, we had to just cool our jets following the line of cars until we reached Walnut Creek Road, just after all of the twisty bits. FINALLY, we could go again! That relief was soon tempered by the realization that there was a lot of opposing rush-hour traffic, some of which were long pickup trucks that were barely able to stay in their lane going around some of the tight blind turns, requiring a bit more caution along the way. The caution was thrown aside a few miles before reaching highway 107 when we got behind another string of cars following a pickup truck that was pulling a pontoon boat at about 15 mph from Thorpe Lake (reservoir) down to a storage yard at the bottom of the hill, through the last twisty bit before the highway. FINALLY, we reached hwy 107 and were able to enjoy the twisties heading north out of Glenville! Oops! A sign soon informed us that there was road work ahead, slow traffic for 5 miles, but there was none in sight, so off we went. Oh oh! Stopped traffic ahead. We had

found the slow traffic. A road painting crew was now at the head of a line of traffic that was so long we couldn't see the front of the line, so for the next 2 ½ miles, we were rolling down the hill, engines off, riding the brakes, at what seemed to be not much more than a walking pace. FINALLY, after passing the power station at the bottom of the hill, the painting crew had reached the end of their work zone and pulled off the road! But now we were stuck behind a line of cars that was so long there was no point in trying to pass because there were just more cars to pass, so we had to ride it out the rest of the way to Sylva. Once we were finally out to US-23, we found a fast-moving car to chase and were able to make the expressway somewhat interesting the rest of the way back to Waynesville to end the day.



Tuesday saw our group of six head out on the DragonHala loop, to ride the Tail of the Dragon and the Cherohala Skyway. We made a small modification to the route by doing a combination of the regular and reverse routes to do the Moonshiner (hwy 28) in the morning and again in the afternoon on the way back, such a great road, got to do it again! To everyone's relief, we had light traffic for the whole ride.

On Wednesday, we headed northeast. We followed the Half-Rattler/BRP ride to Little Switzerland for lunch at the Inn. After lunch, we followed the Rattler Reverse back to Waynesville, riding to Erwin, TN, then back to Hot Springs, and down the entire length of the Rattler. Once again, our enthusiasm was curbed, as a couple of miles out of Hot Springs we found a driver whose mission in life was to keep people from killing themselves on hwy 209 by going at the posted speed advisories around all the turns, and between the turns, and moving

over to block anyone with the gall to try to pass. That continued for about two miles until they mercifully turned off and we were able to enjoy the rest of another one of the great roads in North Carolina.



On Thursday, most everyone departed for home. I, on the other hand, headed to Lewisburg for the Fall Color Ride. With another perfect day for riding and trying to make the ride as nice as the weather, I headed back up 209 to ride the Rattler again, then on some less exciting roads to get to Marion, VA, where I picked up SR-16 north to Tazewell on the Back of the Dragon. In Tazewell, I found another dragon sticker to adorn one pannier, as well as a Dragon Master sticker for the top case, a magnet for my refrigerator, and a cup of coffee for me. From there I headed up to Lewisburg, where I met up with MSTRider Mike Dupuis from South Carolina, and people from the MSTA who were also there for the MSTA Fall Color Ride.



On Thursday evening, the hotel provided a shuttle bus, with one of the staff who volunteered to drive it, to take everyone to Food and Friends in downtown Lewisburg for dinner. The shuttle bus driver had to make 6 total round trips to do this, 3 to bring everyone there, and 3 more to bring everyone back to the hotel. It was a great dinner, with much lively conversation. Mike and I shared our table with Doug Pippen

and another MSTAer whose name escapes me.

Friday, Mike and I rode one of the event routes that took us up hwy 92 and 39 to Warm Springs, VA, then up US-220 to Smoke Hole Road, after which we headed a few miles off-route to Petersburg, WV, for lunch at the local motorcycle dealer that happens to have a restaurant attached to the dealership. The return route took us back down to Seneca Rocks, Cass, Snowshoe, and Marlinton on the way back to Lewisburg, on another perfect day for riding. Back in Lewisburg, the other ten MSTRiders who had come down from Marietta were arriving.



For Saturday, most of the groups from Friday stayed together, but Osamah El-Aroud and Mohammed Mubarak joined Mike and me. To allow more time for the morning fog to lift, our group headed north from the hotel about 1 mile to Lewisburg Classic Cars, where they were having Coffee and Cars on Saturday morning. The owner has over 100 classic cars. He mostly just collects cars but opened the dealership so others can see the cars, as well as to get dealer plates and a blanket insurance policy so he can drive any of his cars at any time. He sells a few cars per year. After looking over some of the classic cars he has on display, we headed back through Lewisburg to begin our ride for the day. Our first stop was at the John Henry Memorial Park, just outside of Talcott, WV. John Henry was a steel driver working on the Big Bend Tunnel for the C&O Railroad. Steel drivers wielded the hammers that were swung at long steel drill bits used to drill holes to place explosives in rock for mining and for tunneling. The steam drill had recently been invented and

threatened to put all of the manual laborers out of work. Legend has it that in the early 1870s, John Henry challenged the steam drill to a contest. With a hammer in each hand, John Henry won, drilling 15 feet, while the steam drill only drilled 9 feet, but when he was done, John Henry keeled over dead from exhaustion. He's buried about 1000 feet east of the tunnel. After checking out the tunnel, we continued on for lunch in Mullens, then headed back to Lewisburg via a nice, twisty, round-about route to conclude another perfect day of riding with great friends, riding great motorcycles on great roads.



Sunday saw most people heading back to Marietta under overcast skies with light rain predicted, while Mike headed back to South Carolina. After a luggage malfunction on Osamah's Ducati Supersport, he, Mohammed and I decided to take US-60 across to Charleston, then superslab it home from there. As Osamah and I jumped off I-77 at US-33, Mohammed continued north to the Akron area. Osamah left US-23 shortly after we arrived in Michigan to head the last stretch home, as I continued back toward home in Pentwater.

This concluded another great week and great season of riding on some of the best roads east (and some west) of the Mississippi River, with one of the best clubs in all of North America. I'll

say "thank you" to everyone who participated in our meetings and riding events throughout the year. Each one of you is what makes this club special. To you, and to those who were not able to participate this year, I hope to see you also at some of our winter meetings as we plan for next year, and then I hope you can join us at some of our events in 2022. I'll see you on the road.

Let's Eat Pie in Pie Town

By: Don Pennington

It all began on a Tuesday Bike Night evening in Depo Town Ypsilanti. I was sitting around with fellow bike riders having a Mushroom Swiss burger. The usual bike talk was taking place – new bike models, recent rides, tires, etc. and watching bikes parade down Cross street in Depo Town. After eating my burger, I was in the mood for some type of desert – perhaps a nice piece of cheesecake with strawberry topping or some tasty flavor of pie. As discussion continued one of the bikers at the table said he knew a real great place to have a wonderful piece of pie. He began talking of a bike trip he had previously taken and on his route had found a small town resembling a wide place in the road, in the middle of nowhere, along highway 60 in New Mexico. He continued his story by stating that on his ride across the country he stopped at a community called Pie Town. After parking his bike, he went into the Pie-O-Neer Café' and after being seated at one of the few tables, he asked for a piece of rhubarb pie. The waitress, Kathy Knapp, owner of the cafe then gave the bad news, she had not baked a rhubarb pie that day. As my friend ordered a different kind of pie and talked to Kathy about his trip across the country, she asked if his trip would take him back across New Mexico? He stated that his route would indeed take him back across New Mexico on his return trip. At hearing this Kathy said that if he returned to her café on his return trip, just give her a call and a piece of rhubarb pie would be waiting for him. He said it was an outstanding piece of pie.

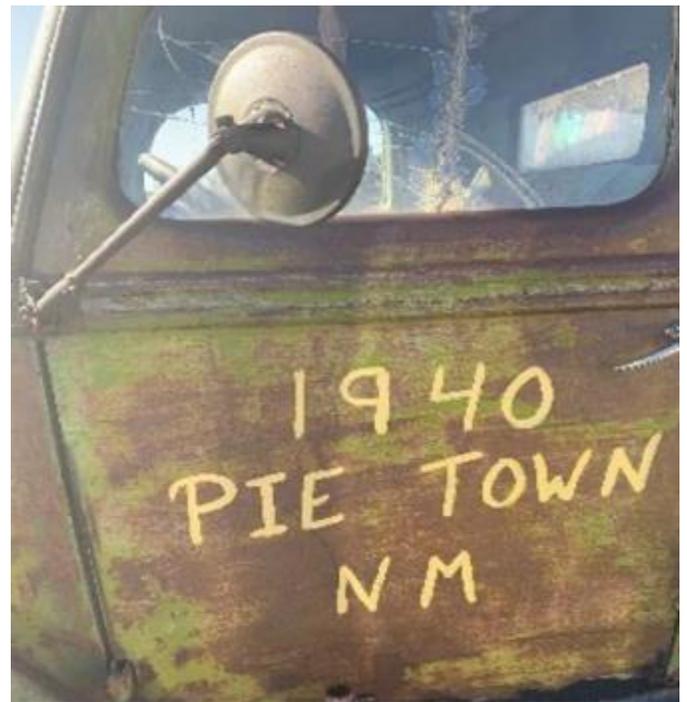
The conversation with my friend then became more exciting. I had to know where the Pie-O-Neer Café was in New Mexico. After the bike

night gathering, I went home and told Jan about this wonderful experience and that there was a real place called Pie Town, it had an extraordinary pie selection and some of the best pies that could be had. While Jan got out her maps and began to put a route together for a future bike trip, I began to research what Pie Town and the Pie-O- Neer Café was all about.



I discovered that Pie Town was an unincorporated community on Highway 60 in Catron County, New Mexico, with a population of 186 residents. It is about 2 miles west of where US 60 crosses the Continental Divide and is close to the Continental Divide Trail. Pie Town has been known for pies since the 1920's, when World War I veteran Clyde Norman began selling dried apple pies at a little stand at the Continental Divide on U.S. 60, then known to travelers as the Coast-to-Coast Highway. A small community sprang up and residents started campaigning for a post office in "Pie Town." However, the U.S. Postal Service felt the name was beneath the dignity of the department, but locals persisted and in 1927 the name Pie Town became official.

In 1940 the residents of Pie Town and the local restaurant "The Daily Pie Café" were photographed by Russell Lee and were the subject of an article in the Smithsonian magazine in 2005. Also, in 2014 there was a feature-length documentary produced by CBS News Sunday Morning which told the story of Pie Town.



So, with all this inspiring information, Jan prepared a potential route to New Mexico, and we were ready for a bike trip to Pie Town to have at least one piece of pie if not more. We were also inspired by the story of a man who lived in Oregon, read the Smithsonian Magazine article and as a result wanted to go to Pie Town, but his wife didn't want to go, so he drove all the way from Oregon to Pie Town, went to the café, ordered a meal and piece of pie, and then turned around and drove back to Oregon. So, overflowing with great expectations Jan and I were off to New Mexico seeking to find the community of Pie Town and the "Pie-O-Neer" cafe.

As we began our bike trip to New Mexico it was evident that Jan had not prepared a direct route to New Mexico. There were a couple more states and roads we just had to take on our trek. But we finally arrived in New Mexico, found Pie

Town and parked in front of the Pio-O-Neer cafe.



It was an old building with a western façade. Inside was an old washing machine, a large wood burning barrel in the middle of the café, a couple tables and a pair of booths along the one wall.



There were rows of freshly baked pies along one wall. We seated ourselves in one of the booths, waited for service, and tried to determine the kind of pies that were being brought out from the smells throughout the café. There was an old sign hanging on the wall which seemed to make sense and we followed its direction when a waiter came to our table. We ordered two pieces of pie to start (I can't remember the names of the pieces of pie) but they were outstanding, definitely not diet pies.



When we came into the café, there was only one other person ordering pie. As we sat down, we wondered how the business could survive with only 183 residents in Pie Town and out in the middle of New Mexico. By the time we finished eating our pieces of pie, the café was crowded with people sitting at the available tables eating pie while others stood in line for takeout, buying, in most cases, more than one pie. Later we were told that people come from miles around to buy pies, with most of the people coming from adjoining States. We were also wondering how many types of pie were available. A waiter was serving pie at an adjoining table. I got his attention and asked how many types of pies were available at the cafe. He looked at me with a confusing face and emphatically stated – we have hundreds of recipes and walked away.

Our experience at the Pie-O-Neer café was exceptional, the ride was worth it and we would do it again. Unfortunately, we have learned that the café closed its doors forever on June 15 of last year due to governmental actions resulting from the coronavirus. Knapp, the owner stated, *"they tried alternatives but to no avail. We literally don't have curbs. It's a remote town with dirt roads. I mean, we're on the highway. You can blink and miss us, so the delivery wasn't an option. Most of our customers come from other states."*

When Jan and I went to Pie Town this last April we noticed the abandoned nature of the Pie-O-Neer café. It was a discouraging moment. When Kathy Knapp closed the Pie-O-Neer and put it

up for sale in March 2020, Pie Town was left with a single pie source, The Gatherin' Place. And The Gatherin Place name changed to Pie Town Homestead then when the owners of The Gatherin' Place decided to retire at the end of 2020, it looked like tiny Pie Town would be left pie-less. The thought that a town named after pie would be bereft of its namesake compelled Sarah Chavez, a pie baker at the Gatherin' Place, to make a decision.



Sarah Chavez

In July, a chance conversation took place between Chavez and Knapp to re-open the Pie-O-Neer café. Chavez said that after talking to Kathy Knapp she did a little soul searching and stated "we can do this." Chavez stated that she was fortunate to have a small army of local pie bakers who will continue to work at the Gatherin' Place (name changed to Pie Town Homestead) as well as the Pie-O-Neer café. Chavez stated that Knapp had gifted her with all of her pie recipes. Chavez plans on adding a wonderful coffee and barista service to the café, have cute little snacky items and turn the small room next to the dining area into a full-time music room. Chavez also said she likes to envision people coming in and staying awhile by offering something peaceful, like you see on The Andy Griffith Show, where folks come in and sit

around like the barbershop in Mayberry. Chavez is hoping for an opening date of the first weekend in August.

By itself, a trip to Pie Town and the Pio-O-Neer café is exceptional and worth the bike ride, however there are two other noteworthy opportunities to explore within the general area. Just east of the Pie-O-Neer cafe is the DanCyn Museum. This is a personal project by Dan and Cyndi Lee depicting seven vintage windmills standing on the site. According to Dan and Cyndi, this project is to capture the rich heritage of the area. The museum is open when Dan and Cyndi are home, but the windmills can be easily seen from highway 60.



A little farther to the east down highway 60 is an extremely unique place called the Very Large Array. It can be seen from space and from many miles away as you approach from highway 60. This area contains one of the world's premier astronomical radio observatories which consists of 27 radio antennas in a Y-shaped configuration 22 miles across on the Plains of San Agustin which is really a large flat region surrounded by mountains. Each antenna weighs 230 tons, is 82 feet in diameter, and are mounted on railroad tracks so they can slide around the area to enhance their ability. Based on information provided when you visit the VLA there is an interesting fact concerning the sensitivity of the VLA. They state that a golf ball held by a person 100 miles away can be seen

by the VLA. This area was also the location for the 1997 movie "Contact" starring Jodi Foster.



The bike ride to Pie Town, New Mexico was a rewarding experience. Since the Pie-O-Neer café is reopening, Jan is already pulling the maps out and preparing a wandering route back to Pie Town. We must determine if the current pies are as good as the previous pies.

A special thanks to Keith Danielson and Don Pennington for their articles and pictures featured this month.

Remember... All published articles earn a free breakfast, entry into the year-end newsletter drawing AND your fellow members and the newsletter editor will appreciate your articles. You will also earn points toward the **2021 MOTY Awards!**



MSTR Heads Up

Here is a listing of some of the upcoming local events and meetings within the next few months. If you know of a local motorcycle event in Michigan or Ontario the MSTR would be interested in send Rachel Durling an e-mail to Communications@mstriders.com with the details.

MSTR East "Breakfast" Meetings

Our East Side Breakfast meeting will be on the 3rd Saturday, on November 20th due to Thanksgiving.

MSTR West Breakfast Meetings

Our next West Side MSTR meeting will be on November 13th, 2021, at the Keiser's Kitchen at 700 E. Main St., Lowell, MI at 9am.



MSTR 2021/2022 Rides and Updates

Please check the MSTR website for a tentative list of the rides and events for 2022 (www.mstriders.com).

We have completed all our scheduled riding events for 2021 except we still have the MSTR Mileage Program and the Grand Tour to complete.

Starting in 2022 we'll be adding local weekend day rides around Michigan and surrounding states, stay tuned for details. We're also working on our 2021 MOTY banquet which will take place in January or February of 2022.

Note: MSTRider membership is required to attend a MSTR riding event. We will not be able to add your name to an event sign-up list unless you are a current MSTRider or until your New MSTRider Form or MSTRider Renewal form and fee are received. Go to www.mstriders.com, then navigate to the Resources page and scroll down to the **New MSTRider Form** or the **MSTRider Renewal Form** if you would like to become a member or need to renew your membership.

2021 Michigan One Room Schoolhouse Grand Tour

All Year

The MSTR grand tour returns for 2021 with a visit to one room schoolhouses. It is estimated that at one time there were over 7,200 one room schoolhouses in Michigan. Today, the Michigan One Room Schoolhouse Association (MORSA) has a directory of over 7,000 of these one room schoolhouses that is searchable by county or by school name. Fourteen of those have been selected as our checkpoints for 2021, though you can likely see many more as you ride through the countryside.



To sign up for the grand tour, simply send your *name, email, and telephone number*, to Keith Danielson at keithmdanielson@gmail.com, or sign up at any one of our meetings in Ionia for the west side, or Novi or Livonia for the east side to get the information package to complete the tour. The grand tour is done at your convenience as your schedule permits. The checkpoints can be done in any order between now and November 21. It provides you with an excuse to go for a ride with a destination and purpose in mind. Whether you do all 14 with a bunch of extras, or if you only do one, it doesn't really matter. The only thing that really matters is that you get out on your motorcycle and enjoy a nice ride. To qualify for a finisher's award, you need to send your picture proofs no later than November 21.

We hope you will join us this year to get out to find these 14 schoolhouses. Who knows what other sights, sounds, smells, and history you might find while doing so? You might find a few other pieces of Michigan history, culture, culinary, or scenic beauty along the way, even if your readin', writin' and 'rithmetic are a bit rusty.

Twisty Road Riding Seminar

By: *Bill Webb*

Reminder to those who have already taken the Twisty Road Seminar, one training slot in each seminar is held back for those who have taken the seminar previously who want a free refresher. That list is created on a first-to-request basis. Therefore, if you want to retake the seminar this season, send me an e-mail. webb@motorcyclesafetyassociation.com



For those not familiar with the Twisty Road Seminar program, it was started in 2019 by formation of the Motorcycle Safety Association, a non-profit corporation that has since been determined to be a charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the I.R.S. code. More information about the program and what others who have taken the seminar have said about the program can be seen at: <https://motorcyclesafetyassociation.com/>

If you may be interested in signing-up, you can learn more about the program at the website link above and you can sign-up online at: <https://motorcyclesafetyassociation.com/sign-up-for-training>

Because of the Motorcycle Safety Association's charity status, Amazon has agreed to donate ½

of 1% of the Amazon purchase amounts people make. Your participation in this program is without cost to you. It is a simple two-step process, first go to:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/84-3799306>

where you acknowledge the amount above will be donated to support the Association, without cost to you. Then when you make future purchases, you need only bookmark or start typing: **Smile.amazon.com** instead of Amazon.com and ½ of 1% of your purchases will be donated to the Association. This no cost to you way to support the program will certainly be appreciated. If you sign up on this Amazon program, please drop me a note and let me know.

MSTR Newsletter & Website

The MSTR Newsletter and Website (www.mstriders.com/) belong to you, the riders. They both can only be as good and as interesting as you make them. If you have something to say about a ride, your bike, perhaps a trip you are planning, whatever, send it in for the newsletter and/or website to:

Rachel Durling:

communications@mstriders.com

For Your Information

Regarding politics, the MSTR does not and shall not support any political party. Political discussions are not allowed during MSTR meetings or events.

Regarding human rights, the MSTR does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status in any of its activities.

You are free to have whatever political views you desire, but please leave them at home or on Facebook. Please don't bring them to the MSTR.

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Honda Suzuki of Warren
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www.bmwdetroit.com

MSTR Photo Gallery

The MSTR maintains a Smug Mug photo gallery (<https://mstriders.smugmug.com/>) to allow riders to upload and download pictures of various club events. Upload and download passwords are sent out to participants for each event. Click on the above link or visit the MSTR website and select the MSTR Photo Gallery link to check out all the event pictures.



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