



Michigan Sport Touring Report

November 2021

Editor – Rachel Durling

Unexpected Experiences

By: Don Pennington

I was sitting on my bike in the middle of town waiting for traffic to continue from a stop light. Suddenly, I looked to my left and there was an outstanding young lady standing on the sidewalk yelling and waving her arms at me. She got my attention. Suddenly this beautiful, dazzling lady began running toward me, still shouting and waving her arms. The year 1979 came crashing into my head. The music, Tango Bolero by the Alfred Hausa Orchestra from the movie "10" started playing in my head and it became louder as she approached me. The vision suddenly changed to the beach scene from the same movie, with Bo Derek running towards me. I was in a trance. I didn't know what to expect. She approached fast and the music increased in intensity. Suddenly she was before me and without hesitation she jumped on the back of my bike and put her arms tightly around my waist. In my head the music was reaching a climax. I was still in traffic, but I didn't care. It happened so fast. Then I noticed another person standing on the sidewalk where the fantastic lady had come from waving her hands as well. That person was waving her hands because she had a camera and wanted to get the attention of the magnificent lady on the back of my bike. Quickly and unexpectedly the stunning lady jumped off my bike and looked at me and said thanks. I said "What are you thanking me for?" She said she was part of a group on a scavenger hunt and needed a picture of her sitting on a motorcycle. Off she ran with the other person on the sidewalk. The music in my head was like a record with a broken needle.

After the honking of horns from cars behind me, I came to a reasonable state of reality and tried to distinguish between the brake lever and the clutch lever and which way to turn the throttle. I gradually began to move. The dazzling lady and her companion had vanished down the sidewalk. I was alone. It was a thought-provoking experience.



Some experiences are not quite as dramatic as the last described encounter, but many are unique and exceptional experiences that can be remembered, cherished, and passed on as something special based upon riding a motorcycle.

The presence of animals along and on roadways have always been of concern as Jan and I have ridden our motorcycles in the US and Canada. Riding our bikes have resulted in several close, direct, and inspiring encounters. We have ridden past grizzly bears along roadways in Alaska; encountered a startled moose with two calves standing in the middle of a remote road and blocking our way in

Wyoming; deer running across the road in front of us; dogs, especially a large St Bernard, running toward us as we rode by; a turkey vulture flying into the front of my bike taking out my radiator and fan assembly making my bike inoperative; Jan hitting a turkey resulting with feathers flying, etc. All of us have had similar experiences.



One of the most memorable encounters, however, was within the Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota. The Park contains two distinctive areas which are about 60 miles apart. The northern portion of the park is more rugged with scenic vistas, unique landscapes, open prairie, and a 14-mile interior road allowing vistas of what is considered one of the last remnants of wilderness in the Northern Great Plains. The major feature of the southern portion is a 36-mile loop that has a historical past, natural features and abundant wildlife including herds of buffalo and majestic wild horses. Our adventure took place in the southern portion of the park. After riding the northern 14-mile drive we were off to the southern portion of the park where the visitor center was located. Upon talking to a ranger about motorcycle riding, our bikes, and our intended route after leaving the park, we stated that we were going to ride the 36-mile loop road within the park. The ranger became concerned and stated that they had had incidents with bicyclists and motorcyclists riding the 36-mile loop road where buffalo were present. It raised some concern, but we decided to ride the loop road anyway. The ranger's words came to life about 5 miles into the loop road when we came around a curve and the largest buffalo we had

ever seen was standing in the middle of the road, his huge head turned toward us, with a staring, threatening eye aimed at us. The road at that point was gravel, we were pointed downhill, could not back up, and did not dare to make maneuvers to try and turn our bikes around. We just stayed on our bikes without making a sound, there was no other choice. The buffalo continued to look directly at us in an uneasy way, but we stayed still. After several minutes the buffalo turned and walked off the road. We started our bikes and slowly moved past the buffalo in safety.

A similar encounter within the park involved a large herd of buffalo which decided to occupy the internal park road while eating grass on each side of the road. Several cars had stopped to wait for them to move. After several minutes the buffalo did not move and neither did the backed-up cars. It was getting late in the day, and we decided to take a chance. We slowly went around the waiting cars and maneuvered carefully around and within the buffalo herd standing in the road. No buffalo moved and we gently left the area without incident.

After the buffalo incidents we continued riding on the loop road, rounded a curve and before us was a magnificent herd of mustangs running on and adjacent to the road. The herd surrounded us and we rode with them for about ½ mile. It was an outstanding experience.



Being surrounded by animals seems to be something that happens to us often. One more event comes to mind in Southeast Idaho. Jan and I were traveling around the southern

portions of the Teton mountains on highway 22 heading toward Jackson, WY when we rounded a curve and found thousands of sheep before us. We remained stationary and the sheep surrounded us as they moved along the highway. It was fascinating to watch sheep dogs, at the sides of the herd, keeping all strays with the main body and continuing up the road. In our bike-riding of rural roads, up to this time we have been surrounded by sheep twice and goats once.

Some of our most rewarding experiences, when riding our motorcycles, take place when we are stopped in a parking lot or gas station, or people know we are riding motorcycles due to our riding gear. One occasion was at a two-pumper gravel gas station in the rural areas of Texas. As we were filling our tanks, a white pickup truck came across the gravel parking area with a cloud of dust and stopped on the other side of the gas pump next to us. As he stepped out of the truck it was evident that he was a real cowboy with appropriate attire, white hat, decorative boots, and an ornamental belt buckle that only a real cowboy can wear the right way. He was also straight as a board with no evidence of body fat anywhere. He came over to our side of the pump and the conversation began. He happily stated that he was 90 years old, had recently lost his life-long wife and companion who had gone to heaven. It was fascinating as he talked about his life and many other subjects. After a short time, he looked seriously at our motorcycles and said he was not sure about those things and did not understand them. He stated he had his horse and loved to ride through the beautiful landscapes of Texas. As we continued to talk, I told him that Jan and I also loved to ride our motorcycles through the beautiful landscapes, not only in Texas but also throughout the United States. Jan explained to him that she had ridden her motorcycle in 49 of the 50 states. As the conversation was almost over, I looked at him and said there was little difference concerning his desire to ride his horse within the beautiful landscapes of Texas and our desire to also ride our motorcycles through the beautiful countryside of the US. At the end of our conversation, it became evident, and we both

agreed, that his desire and our desire were the same, only he on his horse and Jan and I on our motorcycles. An experience I have pondered on since that time.

Another unexpected experience was in the ghost town of Trilingual, Texas which is an abandoned quicksilver mining town surrounded by the Big Bend national park along highway 118. Remnants of existing buildings are seen throughout the area, remains of mining history activities, a unique cemetery, and some buildings that are still active with various public activities. The most active center of Terlingua is the Starlight Theatre Restaurant and Bar. This is a gathering place for most of the residents and visitors and worthy of a visit to eat a meal or observe interesting activities on the porch along the entrance to the building.



Another small historic building near the Starlight Theatre contains works and crafts of local artists. Jan and I went into this small building to see some of the many types of art displayed in the building. We were met by a friendly lady that began talking about the artists and their work. After some time, Jan mentioned she was riding a BMW motorcycle and was from Michigan. That began an extensive conversation when Jan learned that the individual she was talking to was Voni Graves who was one of the two famous women that had ridden BMW motorcycles over one million miles.

In everyday life, there are numerous experiences that we encounter and share that result from riding a motorcycle. They can happen at out-of-the-way locations with

individuals that have a story to tell or any time when we are riding our motorcycles. Just be prepared, enjoy the opportunity, and share the experiences with others.

It was a great experience, and many stories were exchanged between Voni and Jan.



wind. The motorhome weathered that one without damage and we moved on. We had to stop in at Wall Drug for nostalgia's sake. We had not been there since our honeymoon trip 43 years prior. To our surprise, it hadn't changed much.



A Logan's Pass to Remember

By: Vince Ursini

Andrea (Drea) and I had a planned a ride to Banff, Canada with two other couples at the end of July. The plan was to base in Missoula, Montana and then ride up through the border. COVID changed our plans and the other couples canceled. We had the time and at least one week booked at a campground. Figured we could find other campgrounds nearby, that turned out to be more challenging than we expected. We drove out in the class C motorhome pulling a trailer with the Harley Road Glide. The ride out was a three-day affair with tense moments driving through a horrendous storm in Iowa where we were fearful the motorhome might end up on its side. Having followed a truck for 10 miles we were able to find an exit and point the motorhome rig into the

Once we pulled into Missoula and set up camp, we couldn't help but notice that the low cloud cover was actually smoke from nearby fires in Idaho. After a day's break from travel, we took a Harley ride towards Lewiston along US-12. 40 miles into the ride it appeared we made a mistake. The smoke was heavy, and we were heading into a ravine where we literally could not see the bottom through the smoke. Drea kept tapping me on my shoulder to turn around concerned we were driving into fires. My stubborn self wouldn't hear it (I really should listen to my wife more often). But this time it worked out, we shot out the other side of the ravine and the smoke dissipated. The sun was spectacular dancing off the Clearwater River. The road was a perfect balance of 40 mph sweepers and hill climbs, and the weather was perfect. Cool bridges and a wonderful lunch in Kooskia (yup that's a town of 561 people) made for a great maiden voyage.

Next up was Glacier National Park. We attempted to get a campground near the park entrance but that was a no-go. Simply too many people/campers at this time of year but we were fortunate to pick up a couple of days at Polson campground overlooking Flathead Lake. Flathead is a beautiful 50-mile-long lake about a 1 hour and ½ from the entrance of Glacier. The view from our campsite was spectacular, although we didn't know it for a couple of days because of continuing fire & smoke issues. Once the smoke cleared up, the image of mountains reflecting on the lake was a great way to down a hot cup of coffee in the morning. In the case of my wife, she loved having the heated pool to herself with the same mountain view.



The ride up to Glacier around flat head lake was a great ride in itself. We left in the afternoon figuring we would get there around 3:00 p.m. and get right in. As it turns out that was the perfect plan. We heard later people were trying to get in at 7 or 8 a.m. and were waiting for an hour and a half. Once hitting the entrance, we had to show our National Park pass (only one of you need it as it turns out). Also, had to show our motorcycle vehicle pass for that week which we got back in April. They also added an additional requirement of a "Road to the Sun" ticket for \$2, which gave you a time to get on the road. Of course, we knew nothing of that last requirement, and it was impossible to buy that ticket as they were instantly sold out a week ahead of time. Fortunately, the youngsters at

the park let us in without issue. Just check ahead for any new requirements if you get out there. But our recommendation would be to get there around 3:00 p.m. No lines and you'll get right in.

We immediately knew we were on to something special when starting out on the Road to the Sun. The Lake McDonald view was awesome, and we had to pull over to walk down to the beach to take it all in. We talked about the bear attack that occurred at the park just a few days earlier and realized, that the \$50 can of bear spray that I left in the motorcycle was not going to do us much good on the beach. Needless to say, the walk back to the bike was done a little more urgently. Geez. Moving on up the mountain to Heaven's gate and through rock tunnels were spectacular. Although, it was a bit difficult to keep the Harley pointed in the right direction with Drea hanging off the wrong side of the bike because she was concerned about the view down the mountain road. A couple of stops along the way, we ran into a mountain goat, within an arm's reach, walking down the road.



Logan's Pass was jaw dropping. Pictures simply do not do it justice. Being there experiencing water falls that drop thousands of feet and mountains all around you reaching to a blue sky was like having court side seats watching God create. I've ridden through the Smokey's, the Pacific coast highway, the Sierra Nevada Mountain range and Yosemite National Park, all great rides but this one takes the cake. It was a

trip we had to take a second day in a row. On the second run, we decided to remove motorcycle helmets once headed up to the pass. We got the full effect. What a sight!

On the back side of the mountain range, we were in a bit of a hurry to get back to the camper to let the dog out and tried to make a few passes in a 35-mph zone. Not so easy with the hills and turns and two cars in front of us. Anyway, made the pass and immediately got pulled over by a park ranger going the other way that got us at 55 mph (the peak speed reached while passing the cars). Once removing our helmets and pulling out our "senior cards" (gray hair etc.), it was apparent that the young park ranger felt bad. I think we reminded him of his grandparents. After a full check out and the fact I haven't had a speeding ticket in 15 years, he let us off with a warning. Nope, we're not ashamed and will use the "senior card" every chance we get!



Off to Yellowstone the next day. Drove the motorhome and trailer to Old Faithful, to get a viewing in. This had to be the funniest scene we saw on this trip. Literally, thousands of people,

smart phones out, staring at a rock for an hour. What a colossal waste of time for a 5-minute gush of water. We looked at each other and broke out laughing and didn't stop laughing until we left the park. My gosh, is this what most people's idea of adventure has come to?

We ended up camping in Wyoming about an hour from the Grand Teton's. By the way, look up what Grand Teton's is named for. Suffice it to say that French guys named it, ha . . . The next day was another Harley ride from Wyoming to explore Jackson Hole and the big Ti__ __'s. Jackson Hole was sprawling with tourists. Went to several restaurants and couldn't get a seat for more than an hour. Finally ended up at the Million Dollar bar, who has horse saddles for bar stools. Cool place. They had two large bars, but one was shut down due to insufficient workers. Covid strikes again. Anyway, after being in Jackson Hole for nearly 2 hours and now starving, we headed up to the entrance of the Grand Tetons for an hour long wait for a sub sandwich. Conclusion: Never visit this area at the end of July, just too many tourists (like us).

Wyoming is underrated. The mountains and plateaus are really unique and interesting, although dry and hot. A pizza and beers in another small town at the end of the day was the best way to put an exclamation mark on this trip.



It's a trip we'll remember for a long time. The people we met at the campgrounds were awesome and interesting. A couple from

Belgium who rode a Harley and bicycles (of course), to the 'Utah Wrangler' we met up at Polson who made friends on the road and recruited for a women's motorcycle group. Surprising the number of people that worked from their campers remotely. For my part, I prefer not to mix work and leisure travel, but you do see a lot of the country while collecting a paycheck. Another fond memory was how well our little dog Buddy did during the trip. He was like energized sitting between Drea and myself for the 4000 miles we put in over 3 weeks. And although, he couldn't join us on the 1500 miles put on the Harley, Buddy loved campground life. A few months after the trip we had to put poor Buddy down (dang cancer). But he had a hell of a last ride. Looking forward to some new adventures next year!

A special thanks to **Don Pennington** and **Vince Ursini** for his article 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 or 2022 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 Saturday, on January 22nd, 2022, at Coach's Corner, 36000 W Seven Mile Rd, Livonia, MI 48152 at 9am.

MSTR West Breakfast Meetings

Our next West Side MSTR meeting will be on January 8th, 2022, at the Alibi Bar & Grill, 1394 East Riverside Dr, Ionia, MI, 48846 at 9am.

Please email Gala at gschip@me.com to let her know that you will be there for breakfast, so that she can plan to have enough food for everyone.



MSTR 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.

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 February of 2022.

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. wwebb@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 1/2 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:

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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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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.



Check out this blog about Honda Trail 80's in Alaska:

<https://www.survivalistboards.com/threads/a-trip-across-alaska-on-a-postie-honda-trail-90.975346/>

Thanks, Bart, for the link!



Miss you Maury!

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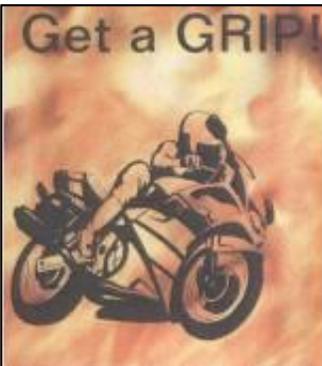
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