

Izzy's 4th International Lunch and Ride

May 23rd, 2009



I had been in contact with some nice guys on the Burgman yahoo group, who told me of a RTE (Ride to Eat) they were doing on May 23rd. I didn't have the kids this weekend, and nobody in the Louisville Scooter Group was doing anything, so I figured "what the hell". We were to meet between 11am and noon for tire kicking at Izzy's Deli in Florence, KY which is an interstate suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio. I got an email from one of the guys, Konrad, who lives in LaGrange. He was going to meet up with a couple others and I was welcome to ride up with them if I wanted!

I left the house at 830am. I discovered that a clip on my helmet shield was broken, and I got it at Cycle Gear, so I called and they had a replacement lens. I got there right at 9am and got the shield, installed it, and trashed my old one. I had to make it to LaGrange by 10am to meet Konrad.

I got to LaGrange, and I rode around the courthouse square. I didn't see any other bikes, so I got off and poked around. There was a farmer's market going on. I wandered around, got a slice of melon to try, and bought some dried mango-- something that would keep thru the day. I also got a cup of coffee and kept my eye out for the people I was supposed to meet. I had not yet had the pleasure of meeting Konrad, so I didn't know what he would look like or be riding.



It was getting close to 1030, so I got ready to go. On the way out, a woman asked me if I did any good fishing today. It was the chaps (again), and I am now thinking the coyote brown was a bad choice... I finished my coffee and rode around the square. I didn't see anyone parked around the square on a bike or scooter, so I figured I must have missed them. They were across the street diagonal from the courthouse and since I didn't know them, I missed 'em. I left just after 1030 to go to Florence. One note about the pictures I took... In order to safely snap pictures on the fly, I fabricated a special mount for my camera. It was made of a retractable keychain (such as the metal wire type that reels your keys in and fastens to your belt) and some other bits. I was able to take pictures and movies while riding, and also detach for other shots.

On I-71 there was a massive wreck.



I was very glad I wasn't headed in towards Louisville. There was a semi and two cars involved. It may have actually been one car but in two large pieces. Regardless, the traffic was locked up for miles. I made it up to Florence in fairly short order and Izzy's was pretty easy to find.



When I got there, I met Konrad and his son. I had missed them just barely in LaGrange. No big deal... I also met Bob #1, and Bob #2, Ron, Richard and some other folks. So many I could not get all the names down.



Konrad in blue denim shirt, his son in the green shirt.

We ate at Izzy's and I had a half Ruben sandwich because it is their specialty. It came with a potato pancake! Both were pretty awesome.



After this, I left a little early with a couple other guys to fill up before the ride to Rabbit Hash. Everyone else stopped at the station too and we started the ride from the Speedway down the street.



We got on the road and it was a pretty good ride to Rabbit Hash. I think Rabbit Hash is one of those "motorcycle heaven" places where all roads leading to and from are fantastic riding. I was behind the guy on the Triumph. Man I love the looks of that bike. Who knows, maybe I could have one in the distant future??? There were tons of riders out coming our way too. I think I mentioned before that the day was perfect for riding. The weather had called for 'possible' or 'occasional' thunderstorms, but in this instance it was the meteorologists hedging their bets!



We pulled into Rabbit Hash, and the whole place was packed with mainly bikes but also a few trucks. I think our group had the only scooters there. Nowhere did I hear any biker talk bad about the scooters. They seemed generally interested—which was the sentiment I got most the entire day.



I had to go into the Rabbit Hash General Store. The place is motorcycle-legendary. I got a bottle of their special hot sauce and a ceramic mug as a souvenir. Also I got a rabbit hash sticker for Lois. I was a little disappointed they didn't have anything small and inexpensive for me to get Lexie and Logan, but I gave them some odds and ends stuff. We are sharing the mug and hot sauce!

One of the fellows I was riding with took my picture in front of the store.



I found a nice lady to take group shots of the whole bunch of us.



The route to Augusta was awesome also. The guys did a great job planning this all out and said they had run it a couple times already checking it out.



One of the guys I rode with (I believe his name is Richard) has a silver Burgman, and he has fabricated highway pegs for his scoot!

I really want a set of these!



We ran beside the Ohio River most of the way. Again, the weather was perfect, only white puffy clouds, and not a dot of gray in the sky. We took a quick pit stop at the TA station and truckstop so we could regroup. With around a dozen bikes, it's easy to get split at a stop, though we did get a break from many cagers who were out. I figure there were so many bikes out they were extra aware of us.





We got to Augusta, Kentucky which was the area that had the ferry we were taking back across to Ohio. It also has the Hollywood Clooney family's home (Rosemary, mother and George, son). We stopped for gas and I had enough to complete the ride, so I just looked around for a minute. On the way in, I saw two pictures I wanted to get. One was the "Welcome to Augusta" sign. I also spied this cool bridge over a small creek. I didn't see the equally cool tunnel until I got there. I was set to get the picture on the bridge when a guy and his passenger came over on their bike.



It must be a popular place. As a matter of fact, this weekend was perfect riding like I have not seen this year so far, and **everywhere** was a popular place for riders.

After snapping my pictures, I went to the little area down by the Ohio where the ferry docks. Right before you get there is a little street with shops and a restaurant. Everyone was milling around and so I stopped and got off to look around.



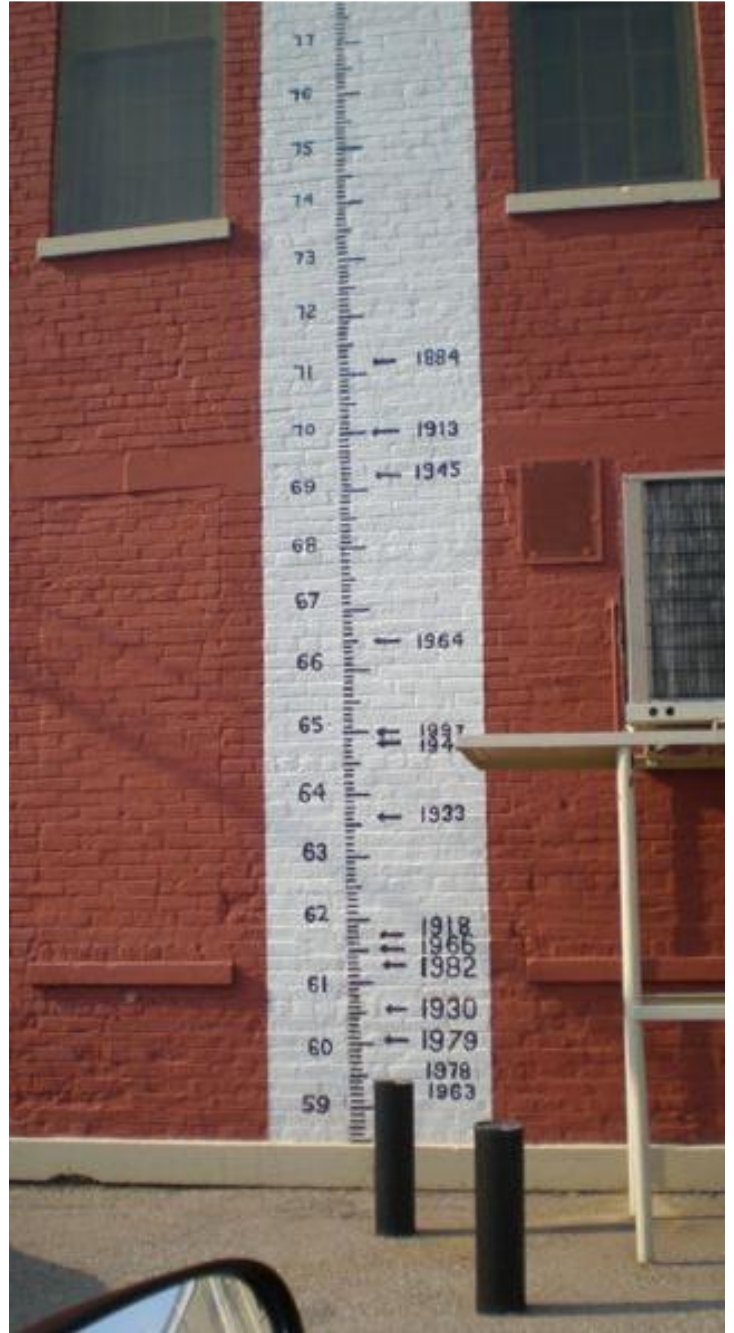
I got to talking to Konrad's son. He told me how his dad had just had a heart attack several days ago and how he told his dad that he wouldn't let him ride up alone. That's the kind of son I hope Logan turns into. I also talked to the other friend of Konrad's (though I forget his name). I got so busy jawing, that I got to the ferry just after it filled up. We had to wait for the next run. The day was still good, and weather holding at perfect. I was not the only one who missed the boat, and we did a regroup with the other riders just over the Ohio.



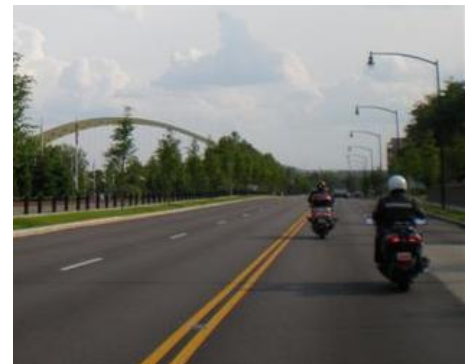
Running back down US-52 through Moscow, Ohio I noticed that Cinergy has a little power plant there. Not coal like the ones I see near Louisville...this one had a tell-tale cooling tower... The camera mount I made was perfect to take these kinds of on-the-fly shots!!!



When we got in towards town, we rode behind this old building near the river. The back of it is painted to show a ruler of flood measurements.



We headed into the streets of Cincinnati proper. At this point we'd had numerous riders peel off as the day wound towards its end. We ended at the Montgomery Inn Boathouse Restaurant.



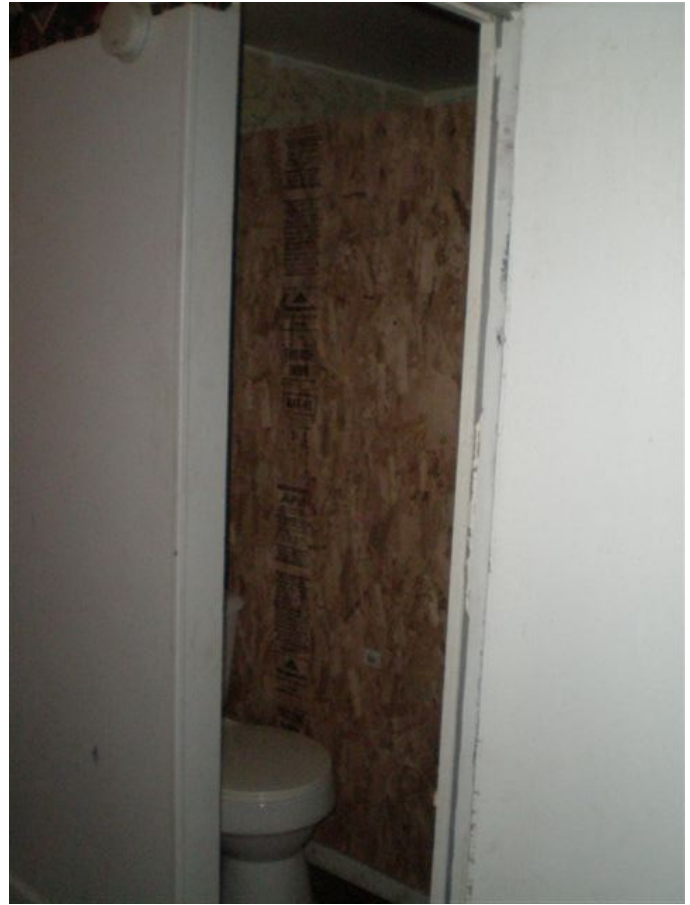


Apparently, the name “boat house” does not imply the upscale-ness, and one of the guys who’d been there before told me “you might want to take those off” pointing to the Colorado Chaps “they’re hardly appropriate.” The restaurant does not take reservations and there was still 45 minutes left to wait. We kicked tires for a while in the parking lot—which ended up being a sidewalk with the valet and parking attendant’s permission. I declined to join them for the actual meal, mainly due to time, but was not feeling the love for a \$40 hamburger... When the buzzer went off, Ron and I stayed outside for a bit and talked scooter clubs, bikes, spouses, and rallies for a while, then I decided it was time to go.

I originally was headed straight home, but finally got in touch with Theresia who said she would go check on my dog Splott (who has medical issues and has to have medication twice a day) so I decided to bust a move to get a quick bite and find someplace to set up my hammock. I stopped twice, quickly. First stop was McDonalds for a cheeseburger from the value menu. The 2nd was a gas station where I got a fill-up, two Caffeine Free Coke Zeros, and one 24 oz can of Miller Beer. Now, I was ready to camp!!!

Here’s a good tip... If you wait until last minute on Memorial Day weekend to get a campsite for the night, you will likely experience epic failure. It was around 7-8pm and I was ready to call it a day. I shot over to Caesar Creek State Park to 'check in' for the night. They were all full! I went to several campgrounds, riding at a point where I was REALLY ready to not be riding anymore and trying to find one open that would take me. I knew by 9pm that I was going to end up setting up my hammock (for the 2nd time ever!) with the engine running and using the lights of the Majesty. That was not what I had planned. But wait, there's more!

Tomtom was happy to keep providing me with another POI for camping, but I was really D-O-N-E. I was zipping through to the next campsite and I ran across the West Inn, located on SR-22. I thought "I'll check prices." Well, lo and behold, it was only \$30-40 for the room!! I had had pretty good luck before with inexpensive motels—my standards are low which helps. All I require is the place is clean, and somewhat secure. The place looked a little old, but I was pretty beat. I asked "what's the difference between the two prices." The Indian woman explained the \$33 rooms are smaller. Yes! “I'll take it.” I told her, for indeed, I was ready for rest. I get the key, and she explains there is a \$3 deposit. At this point, I’d have paid \$10. I pay, and she directed me to ride around BACK where the smaller rooms are located. It looks a bit shabbier from the back. Even in the dark. There were potholes I could have lost a tire in, junk cars, a dumpster and worst of all, the rooms... I should have left after I'd seen the room, but I was too tired. It was now about 10am.



The walls were dirty. There was a used ashtray next to the bed on the dorm-size fridge. Yes, that is bare unpainted particle board on the wall of the 'bathroom'. It's actually not a bathroom as that would probably mean it had a door. The room was a place for the toilet, prefab stall shower, and an old sink. The floor in front of the toilet was rotten, and you could feel it sinking down when you stepped there. I won't say the bed was unclean, but I was not taking any chances I slept fully clothed. I also slept with all my gear, etc. inside, and my .380 auto next to the bed—this time—loaded. This didn't make me feel too much better as there was not even a deadbolt on the door! At any moment, I fully expected a knock at the door from either a crackwhore, or a drug dealer.



There were surprisingly several other cars indicating other people staying the night. These were the vehicles that I first thought to be either junked or abandoned. I saw a mustang convertible that had maps on the front passenger seat. It was an 80's model with duct tape on the rag top. These were the folks right next to me. At least I had a fellow traveler

nearby. I locked the bike with Kryptonite lock, Screaming Mimi brake lock, and made sure the steering lock was set. I woke up many times during the night. The bed sank in the middle, plus I was coughing all night. I had been having problems with allergies. Riding around all day did nothing to help that. As a matter of fact, several times it appeared to be snowing, but it was actually the trees having their airborne orgies. Also, about 230am I got up to walk around the room for about half an hour. Why? Leg cramps. Awesome!! I tried to hydrate—I swear!

I decided to keep the key for the room at the West Inn as a good reminder to not do this again! It was well worth the \$3 deposit. Oh, I also stole their toilet paper—for the allergies.



Fortunately, Wilmington was not just one dirty flop-house/crackwhore motel. Apparently they have a good section. It is also home to the four star (!!) General Denver Inn. This is in a little downtown area on a cool little street with small-town feel.



On the way out of town, I saw this perfect treehouse that any kid would kill to have, or go to war to keep.



On to the real business of the day... On US-68 headed toward my collection points, I saw this Yamaha dealer, so I stopped to get a picture. The whole front of the building was RED!!! How cool can it get!



If you've been reading my blog any, (www.kentuckianascooter.com) you probably know about my "Everywhere, A to Z" collection. I like to get pictures of my scooter with road signs as a sort of "proof" where I've been. The whole collection

is at my Everywhere A-Z on Picasa at <http://picasaweb.google.com/the1weasel/EverywhereAZ#> As it so happens, I had been able to collect signs for every letter of the alphabet besides X and Y. Both were doable this weekend with my plans to camp overnight in this area. I could still finish the alphabet. For X, I picked up Xenia, Ohio.



This also happens to be the spot where I broke my kick-ass custom camera mount. The camera flopped off onto the ground beside the road while I was stopped. The place where I had it mounted would contact the windshield if I was not very careful. I had been doing great, but must have turned too hard maneuvering into a good parking position beside the Welcome to Xenia sign. Next I ran thru Lebanon, Ohio. No sign, but some cool spots. The Golden Lamb is supposedly the oldest still running business in Ohio.



Next, I hit the interstate again to run up to my final trophy sign. Yellow Springs, Ohio!!



I got Yellow Springs, and ran around through town a little. This is not the first time I had seen a little burg and thought “I could live here.” or “Every town has a few cool little streets and things to see.”



Now I was finally on my way back home. I really wanted to go on the backroads, but didn't have the time—I had to get back to Splott. However, I quickly decided there was one more unplanned stop I must have to do. On the way up to Yellow Springs and on the way back I had noticed the interstate signs for this “Nutter Center” place and decided I **had** to at least stop and see what it was. The Nutter Center is a building on the Wright University campus (of Orville and Wilbur Wright). Ohio is the home of the Wright Brothers... Well, I didn't find out who Mr. or Ms. Nutter was, but the name was so odd, I had to have a picture of this sign. Also one of my UK friends had called me a nutter once. According to Wikipedia, “Particularly in the UK, people with mental disorders are often nicknamed nutters. In general, the word describes a person who behaves erratically or abnormally. It is also used to refer to the overtly religious or conspiracy nuts.” Well, at least now I've been to their Center.



From this point in the day, roughly noon, it was back to Louisville. I made two more stops. The first was a rest stop. I wanted to remove my jacket because I was getting pretty damn hot, but thought better of it. Instead, I filled up an empty soda bottle with water and soaked my t-shirt. This kept me nice and cool until my next stop. I also got a bag full of brochures about camping, parks, and activities in Ohio. Around 1:30 or 2pm, it was time for a gas and lunch stop. I can't recall what the little town I pulled in to, but I didn't want another McDonald's burger like I had for supper the night before. I got Gold Star Chili nachos somewhere in Kentucky. I will now admit that I wasn't in the mood much for chili, but I wanted to eat something that wasn't just what you can get at home. The nachos were a great tradeoff and I really enjoyed them.



Now, I was back on the interstate and from there I just finished up coming home. The rest of the way home was just "sit there, twist that." When I got into town, I had a cool down at Starlight Frozen Custard.



I pulled in at home between 4pm and 5pm. I was pretty tired, but happy to have had a good ride, and to have finished my A-Z goal.