

DO YOU REMEMBER?

25+ YEARS OF SOUTHERN TANDEM RALLY

1979 - Hard Labor Creek State Park - A small group of tandem enthusiasts. We all camped in tents (except the organizers). Ride to breakfast, lunch and dinner. A Century was almost accumulated on Saturday. Tandemists really do ride to eat.

1980 - Twin Pines Conference Center - Birmingham, AL - Twin beds, bunks at that, for all, including the honeymooners. A mile of gravel road to start and end each day.

1981 - Lake City, Florida - The host inn was being restored, some rooms had only a single light bulb hanging from the ceiling. At least there were double beds! The riding and food were excellent. Visiting springs and riding along the Suwanee River. Churches hosted our evening meals.

1982 - Alabama State Park Tour - The tradition was continued - but just barely. The two teams carried their gear, camped and awoke to rain. We found Bob and Ruth Husky sleeping (?) in the laundry room. Climbed Mt Cheaha and found the Kaiser/Hudson car meet. At least we all made it to the top of the hill, one car had to be pushed.

1983 - Callaway Gardens, Calloway, GA - Many lasting friendships were made because of the random room assignments in shared cottages. Exploring the gardens and FDR's Little White House in Warm Springs are favorite memories. The first southern tandem rally that had a triplet with a trailer in tow.

1984 - Brevard, NC - We stayed at a camp, complete with cabins and bunk beds, and woke to chilly mornings! On Saturday we headed off into the fog. Visiting Carl Sandberg's House and touring his goat farm. A great group dinner in camp.

1985 - Ocala, FL - We enjoyed riding through horse country - white fences and big stables, very similar to Lexington, Kentucky. Saturday we rode north to McIntosh, a good scotch town celebrating the day with a fair and parade. The tandems were a part of the parade! We returned to our hotel and a wonderful cookout by the lake.

1986 - Savannah, GA - Touring through town on our bikes, riding around the wonderful squares. The Saturday ride took us to the coast to explore coastal islands and see civil war defenses.

1987 - Cypress Gardens, Lakeland, FL - If you were lucky your room overlooked the Gardens. Each team was greeted with a carnation filled water bottle in their room. Bok Tower and gardens were an idyllic spot for our box lunches. Sunday's brunch at Chalet Suzanne is memorable for the 5 star food and the amenities for the rich.... It had its own air strip.

1988 - Thomasville, GA - Southern Tandem Rally #10 - Thomasville rolled out the red carpet. We enjoyed exploring this winter home of the steel barons and found a taste of the steel baron plantation life interesting as we enjoyed tours and lunch at Pebble Hill plantation.

1989 - Griffin, GA - Wonderful rolling Georgia riding. What fun it was to encounter the civil war reenactment at Indian Springs State Park. The banquet was notable for the tight fit at the local country club tables.

1990 - Mission Inn at Howie In the Hills, FL - A true resort hotel. I don't think any one brought their golf clubs, but we could have. The bikes spent the night locked in the tennis court. We climbed central Florida's MOUNTAIN. Infamous for Floridians, those from hilly areas wondered what all the fuss was about. We do know at least one tandem reached 55 mph on the downhill.

Do You Remember?

25+ Years of Southern Tandem Rally

1991 - Plant City, FL - What were all those straight field long plastic covered mounds? We had to stop to discover they were for strawberries. Plant City greeted us with a dance recital followed by ice cream and.... strawberries. We knew we were in flat territory when we crossed more railroad tracks going more directions than we ever had before. Sunday was our day of flight. Hot air balloon rides (almost) and a visit to the local chicken farm converted to airport to meet the pilots and look at many experimental aircraft.

1992 - Knoxville, TN - We climbed the Smokies. The majority rode up to the west entrance to Smokie Mountain National Park. The brave climbed up to Cades Cove. The return downhill was wonderful. Tales were told Saturday night as Sam Venable taught us the Tennessee dialect.

1993 - Greensboro, NC - If you rode on Friday you did well. It was the ONLY dry day for this three day weekend. The local bike clothing outlet saw many of us, as did the furniture stores. Many dressed up for the Halloween banquet. Sunday saw a quick dispersing of the crowds as the rains continued.

1994 - Alexandria, LA - We were introduced to Cajun. Food and heritage was shared with us. The hosts took the time to locate a crawfish mound to decorate the center of each table. We rode past cotton and cane fields - harvest was in progress - visited a cotton gin and enjoyed lunch at a wonderful plantation (turned B&B) home.

1995 - Asheville, NC - "Stop whining; Keep climbing" - The slogan on our shirts said so much. A return to the Smokies. This time we climbed UP to the Blue Ridge Parkway. We stayed right downtown so we were able to explore Asheville. Many took the time to visit the Biltmore House. The short town tour took us by the Grove Park Inn. An Inn with a million dollar view.

1996 - Sebring, FL - Long a wintering ground for snow birds, southern central Florida is flat with many small lakes and lots of cattle. The riding was low traffic and the local radio club had fun trying to figure out why all these folks enjoyed long bikes. In the evening a wandering magician kept young and old entranced. The closing lunch on Sunday was a nice way to say, "so long until next year."

1997 - Lafayette, LA - Oil Country - and would you believe, orange groves many years ago. Lunch was at the Rip Van Winkle Gardens overlooking the lake that changed from freshwater to salt water virtually overnight. We toured the house and gardens, learning a bit about Joseph Jefferson, the actor that made Rip Van Winkle famous. Sunday we rode through horse country to visit the Evangeline Oak. This is Cajun land, so our meal and Saturday entertainment shared the tradition.

1998 - 20th Southern Tandem Rally - Selma, AL. - A city tour, hosted by local cyclists. Selma has more historic homes than any other city in Alabama. Lunch at Old Cahawba State Park, there isn't much left, the homes had all been moved into Selma! But the welcome center had a great slide show. We closed with a country ride then open house at the most gracious of old homes and a wonderful southern brunch on the lawn.

1999 - Greensboro, NC - Perfect weather this year. We got tangled up in Airport traffic as we located the hotel - directly across from the terminal buildings. Friday we enjoyed a great ride to a working grist mill. Saturday we found more city riding than we expected as we rode through the battleground to lunch at the park and for the brave a continuation to the downtown street fair. We finished on Sunday with great country riding.

2000 - Callaway Gardens, GA - Droughts make for perfect weather. A Velo competition; What is "raw", "natural" and "sweet" - Why honey, of course. 26 questions with answers to be found along the route. We all missed trailer homes as bait at mile marker 8- tornado bait. Warm Springs was hosting its Fall

Do You Remember?

25+ Years of Southern Tandem Rally

Festival - a tractor parade and lunch at Ivey's. Up, up, up to ride the ridge back to Callaway and tour the gardens. The costume party brought out some real creativity, Southern P's were a winner.

2001 - Clemson, SC - Threatening rain. A Poker Run, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, to Central to see Pfeiffer Frames, back to Clemson to the botanic gardens, campus and campus town. Saturday rain threatened but most rode, through beautiful fall brushed, unoccupied, hilly!, roads, to Pendelton for lunch at Cox Hall. Some stopped to enjoy the city fair, some shopped in this historic town. Quickly back to the indoor pool and offsite dinner at the wonderful Clemson Conference center. Sunday, rain arrived, only 7 hardy teams headed out.

2002 - Bay St Louis, MS - Two weeks before the rally - hurricanes hit the coast - Hank & Susan agonize - will there be a rally? Lots of work altering routes, but the roads were clear by rally time. Friday we began with a non bike option - a visit to Stennis Test Facility. After lunch the bikes headed out - a tour along the beach and through town. Restaurants were scoped out for Friday dinner. Saturday Hank had at least 3 police departments co-ordinated to lead us across US 90 to Pass Christian then north to Diamondhead for lunch. He had even arranged to clear a major route blockage in Diamondhead. Thanks Hank, you saved us many miles of riding. 52 miles was the short ride for the day! Great roads, little traffic away from the coast, and buffalo. Dinner at the Casino Magic club house was all you could eat of fantastic food, followed by Charles Gray speaking about area history. Sunday was a FAST blast in the fog. Again, a full police escort through every light on US 90 for 10 miles!

2003 - Tallahassee, FL The hotel was almost in sight of the Capital. Friday a morning ride to McClay Gardens. Out through town on bike lanes (including US 90), then canopy roads and neighborhoods. We found Hopkins (a great local sandwich shop) for lunch. Halloween dress up at the Florida Historical Museum with desert for all Friday night. Saturday, mass start for the long riders UP to the Capital at 20mph! out to St Marks Light House, Wakulla Springs for lunch and return. A banquet in the FSU stadium (it's big) with the FSU Circus ! for entertainment. Sunday great canopy road rides to finish.

2004 - Charlotte, NC. VROOM! WOW, Susana Sisk and John Taliana had assembled the most awesome goodie bags for us, everything from gels and bars, mugs with our photos, admission into the Backing up Motor Museum and even toothpaste. A big group arrived on Friday, and remote started from Concord. A gorgeous small town, spectacular homes, quiet rolling roads once we got away from town. Lunch at George Washington Inn, they handled an unexpected crowd well. FREE ice cream at the creamery afterward (Lemon Ice) The owner is a cyclist and was delighted to see all the tandems. The rally started officially with our Friday night pizza and desert social. Saturday was crisp and sunny, we started by riding 2 miles to the Lowes Motor Speedway. What a thrill! to ride 2 laps around the big oval. The adventurous rode high! Reed Gold Mine was about 30 pleasant miles away. Lunch was at Listke Park in the Big Barn. Plenty of food for all. Dinner saw us back at the speedway. What an awesome facility. We could watch the cart racing from indoor comfort, enjoy never ending fabulous food and laugh at our ventriloquist with his new dummy, Jack Goertz. Sunday's pleasant ride visited horse country on wonderful rural roads. One sad note, this is the first year Bob & Ruth Husky were not able to attend the rally.

Note: Shortly before STR 2005 Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Mississippi Gulf coast. Bay St Louis was virtually whipped out. Our host for STR 2002 Hank & Susan Holcomb did not suffer any wind damage to their home or flooding though water was in homes just two houses away.

2005 - Kingsport, TN. Tennessee's bright spot - Two goodie bags - one with shirts and literature, the other filled with granola bars, cookies and more. Then there were the door prizes - really nice prizes donated by area businesses. Friday's remote start took the teams on gently rolling, lightly traveled roads in Tennessee and Virginia. Two states during one rally! 'Our' room at the conference center easily

Do You Remember?

25+ Years of Southern Tandem Rally

accommodated the entire crowd for the pre-dinner social. Old and new friendships were renewed and made. Saturday a cool crisp morning saw the mass start ride across town, up the hill and onto quiet roads to Jonesboro, the oldest town in Tennessee. A local caterer provided great food in the awesome city welcome center, shops enticed many teams and the cool temps meant there wasn't any hurry to return to the hotel. Saturday evening a casual buffet provided food for all (one of the most fantastic desert tables we've ever seen, complete with Tennessee orange cake). Sunday we headed away from the hotel toward the west and were quickly on pleasant rolling roads, past homes with great Halloween decorations, and at the pumpkin patch a pumpkin that must have been 3' in diameter.

2006 – Sanford, NC – Sandhills of North Carolina. The rally began 'unofficially' with a 42 or 30mi ride to the House in the Horseshoe. Philip Alston built the house just before the Revolutionary War. The interpreter was fantastic, the weather perfect, rolling hills and a couple of bridges over the Deep River made for a perfect start to the rally. Saturday the teams departed for Jordan Lake Dam, more low traffic rolling riding (though it was almost ALL downhill to the dam) and a Lebanese picnic lunch at the hillside (steep up) pavilion in San-Lee park. Potteries to be found during the afternoon and generous food and beverage in the hospitality room before the banquet at the Civic Center. Salmon and chicken with bluegrass music and dancing after. More rollers on Sunday as all rode with a fast clip to beat the rain. Thanks Smith Doss & Claude Monnier.