

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2009

Chance Encounters...

Last week I took my BMW to the local dealer's because I noticed that the gas vapor line from the gas tank to the charcoal canister was disconnected. Not a big deal, but I noticed the smell of gas whenever I had a full tank and there is some slight gas staining down the right side of the engine block. So, anyway, as I was getting ready to leave, a gal came out the dealership door and made a beeline straight for me. I noticed her pull in earlier on a purple Road King...turns out she had just started working at the dealership in the business office.

She and I chatted for a bit, and we exchanged calling cards. She leads an annual all-women ride down to Bay City for lunch and wanted to know if I'd like to join them. "Sure!" I said. It would be a nice way to spend Saturday, and I so rarely go for short local rides. I did ride out to Sealy on Memorial Day to meet someone for lunch, but that was mostly on unremarkable roads to have a first and last meet-up with a mostly unremarkable blind date.



So this morning I backed the FZ out of the garage and headed for Rosharon where I'd be meeting up with this group for a lunch ride to K-2 Steakhouse in Bay City. Departure time was to be 9:30 AM; I arrived at 9:00 AM, thinking I'd be the first one there, but there were already 3 or 4 riders there, and another good-sized group pulled in just moments behind me. The mix of bikes were all Harleys and big Yamaha cruisers and then, of course, there was my little FZ. This little darlin' is dwarfed by those long-wheelbase cruisers, but I've discovered that to riders of those low-slung machines, my FZ looks big (i.e. very tall) and one of the ladies even commented on how big my FZ is.



What a great group of ladies! We were all about the same age, nearly all of us with grown children and grandchildren. The mix of riders' backgrounds would not be known until we had a chance to share stories over lunch, but the one overriding thing we all had in common was the enjoyment of riding.

We would be heading west on FM-1462, a very pretty rural road that I always enjoy on my way to Brazos Bend State Park and to FM-762, a road with some really fine high-speed sweepers. But today our route would turn off of 1462 onto Cow Creek Road. This road has a nice little series of 90-degree curves that repeat themselves a few times over a few miles. It then straightens out a bit and passes between Eagle Nest Lake and Manor Lake before it comes into Hwy 35.

It was agreed that we'd stop briefly in West Columbia for a bathroom break...well, what should have been a brief stop. The ladies' room was closed for cleaning and when we tried to sweet-talk her into letting us in, the worker would have none of it. So we queued up to use the men's room, watching and warning when men approached the facility. With 10 ladies and only one stall, interrupted occasionally by men who wanted to use the bathroom (it was, afterall, their mensroom) things progressed a little slowly, but we did manage to get back on the road eventually.

From West Columbia we turned onto 1301, a really pretty FM road through fields of cattle and horses. The summer wildflowers were in bloom - coreopsis mostly - and the fields were knee-high with prairie grass. I love this road; it passes through Danciger with it's tiny little U.S. post office tucked under the live oak trees. As we passed through Pledger several small children stopped playing long enough to give us big waves as we rode by. We turned south onto FM-1736 at Pledger, but if we had continued on FM-1301, we would have continued to Boling. I've photographed some of the nearly pristine historic buildings - including the school - in this town.

A few miles down FM-1736, we turned right onto Ashwood Road (FM-3156) a surprisingly pleasant little road that took us past an outstanding old mansion - now a B&B. This was a very nice road, recently re-paved, and it took us to US-60 just a few miles north of our ultimate destination: K-2 Steakhouse.



They were ready for us! Our ride leader had called ahead and requested the "buffalo head" room, where the staff had our tables set up and ready. As we filed into the room, there it was: the big buffalo head mounted directly over our table. A little clowning around was in order, before we settled down with menus and greetings, with introductions and a bit more about ourselves. The staff brought in orange balloons to tie to the chairs, and coozies to hand out to each rider. Such a nice touch!



Soon it was time to settle our checks and get back on the road. But not before a group shot under the buffalo head (hope I get a copy of that photo!). Everyone headed for the nearby Shell gas station to fill up, before we headed back the same way we came. The plan was to stop one more time in West Columbia, and as we neared that town, I moved over to the left lane and slowed down so that I could wave goodbye to each of the riders as they passed me on my right.

What a nice group of ladies! I hope I have a chance to ride with them again!

POSTED BY RUNNER AT 3:14 PM 0 COMMENTS 