

The

Richmond Rider

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A publication of the Richmond Rider's Motorcycle Club ... all makes and models since 1993.

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Sweet Home Alabama

Rider Magazine

Although I live in Sweet Home Alabama, my home state is not known for such sweet motorcycling roads, if a sweet road is defined as a curvy one. One of the few exceptions is a route around Little River Canyon in the Little

River Canyon National Preserve near Fort Payne, Alabama.

The ride experience is a little bit like Colorado in reverse. Instead of high rocky mountains towering above, this ride blesses the rider with



deep rocky canyons below. Throw in a river, a twisty road, some waterfalls, a sunny day and your favorite motorcycle, and you might call the ride sweet, too.

The Little River winds its way from headwaters in Georgia across Lookout Mountain before emptying into Weiss Lake in Leesburg, Alabama. It's one of the southeast's deepest canyons and carries the nation's longest mountaintop river, running nearly its entire length down the middle of Lookout Mountain in northeast Alabama. It is also among the cleanest and wildest waterways in the South because there are no dams to regulate its flow, and few manmade developments to cause pollution. Desoto State Park is also included within the preserve's 14,000 acres, but that's another story. Little River Canyon National Preserve also offers the daring adventurer rock

climbing, kayaking, hiking and fishing. Just be careful and make sure someone knows where you are going and what you intend to do. The preserve is a mostly primitive area and is not exactly crawling with folks who can come to your rescue if there is trouble.

It's advisable to stop by the park headquarters at 2141 Gault Avenue in Fort Payne, Alabama, before your ride begins. There you will find maps of the area and various information about the preserve. The park headquarters phone number is (256) 845-9605. It's easy to access this ride route off Alabama Highway Interstate 59 at exit number 218, where you will find a number of motels and restaurants. If it's anywhere near lunch time, you should stop at Durango's Mexican Restaurant, about one Evel Knievel jump east of I-59 (Exit 218), on Route 35 on the right. They serve up a good "Speedy Gonzales" dish.

Heading east off I-59 on Route 35, continue past Durango's and you will see the Alabama Band Fan Club and Museum on the left. It's a large building that is divided

into a museum and gift shop. Inside there are a number of personal items from the band members, so it's worth a stop.

The museum's phone number is (256) 845-1646, and it's open Wednesday-Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and



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Sundays noon to 5 p.m. The museum section closes at 4:30 p.m. each day.

Back on Route 35 southeast just past the 176 junction, turn right into the Little River Falls parking lot. There are restrooms here (outhouses, no running water) and a 50-car parking lot with picnic tables and grills close by. It's a short hike down to the waterfall area and there are hiking trails up and down the crest of the bank as well. It's possible to walk out over the river rocks right up to the waterfall, but be careful of the wet, slippery ones, and be especially careful bringing small children to the area. Quite a few visitors come to this area on nice days and just sit around the bank or on one of the rock formations out in the river. They bring chairs and refreshments and enjoy the day and the scenery. It's possible to find plenty of good views of the waterfall from the hiking trail alongside the river. It's a bit woody but not overly hard to walk the trail.

Leaving Little River Falls it's back on 35 northwest a short distance to Route 176 west. Maurice and I took a left on 176 and began a leisurely ride around the western rim of the canyon. There are eight overlooks along the way to stop, take pictures, rest, eat a packed lunch and just take it all in. By the time we passed Mushroom Rock, I was thinking about how enjoyable it is just taking it easy riding through this place. As a member of the Honda Sport Touring Association (HSTA), I'm a sport-touring-type of rider, so when I see a set of curves up ahead I usually feel a shot of adrenaline and get ready for a quicker pace.

Farther down the road, Grace High Falls Overlook provides a view of yet another waterfall, this one 104 feet high but seasonal. Finally we came upon the cutoff to Route 275, which leads to Canyon Mouth Park (CR 275 is not listed on every map). We considered the signs and literature warning against taking this route, due to the road being rough and steep. But this fork in the road looks inviting so we decided to travel down it anyway knowing that we would simply turn around if the

road conditions became too treacherous for our motorcycles.

Everything went fine for a couple of miles. The road was rough, but nothing a Suzuki V-Strom and Bandit couldn't handle. It all came to an end, though, when we met a truck parked in the road. A stern-looking man with an attitude told us to turn around. He claimed he was a road worker, but we didn't see any road work going on behind him. I thought about pressing on anyway, but decided it was best to simply take another route to Canyon Mouth Park. It may be that 275 south would be a great road to take a dual-sport bike on some other day.



We traveled back and continued down 176 west and had lunch at The Big Time Café, a somewhat modest-looking place that serves a good variety of tasty food. With a good meal in us we hopped back on the bikes and went east on Route 68 to 273 north. From the junction of 68/273 it's about nine miles to the signs pointing to Canyon Mouth Park on the left. This is an excellent place to bring the family. There are plenty of shade trees, a pavilion, a beach, picnic tables, grills, restrooms and very calm water for wading in or fishing (with a license, of course). Canyon Mouth Park is a day-use area only. Camping is permitted in three designated areas within the preserve, including Desoto State Park. Ask someone at Park Headquarters about areas to camp.

PEDIATRIC BRAIN TUMOR FOUNDATION GIVES \$6 MILLION GRANT TO DUKE

The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTf) is giving an additional \$6 million grant to its research institute at Duke University, bringing total funding for the program to \$12 million.

Duke will use the funds to continue to sharpen its research focus on pediatric brain tumors, which are the leading cause of cancer death in children and adolescents. Four out of 10 children with a brain tumor die within five years of diagnosis, a statistic the PBTf intends to improve through its research institute program.

“The goal of this grant is to translate our understanding of childhood brain tumors into novel, less-invasive treatment methods,” said Dianne Traynor, PBTf Director of Research Funding and Advocacy.

“The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Institute at Duke is the largest basic research collaborative in existence for pediatric brain tumors,” Traynor continued. “It brings together established brain tumor researchers and scientists using platform technologies developed for other cancer types. Their work utilizes the disciplines of biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, cell biology and developmental biology to better understand childhood brain tumors.

“The PBTf Institute at Duke is directed by one of the world’s pre-eminent brain tumor researchers, Darell Bigner, M.D., Ph.D. “We’re working first to unravel the molecular mechanisms that drive these cancer cells,” Bigner said. “Then we can develop new treatments that won’t damage the brain the way older treatments do.”

Researchers at Duke share their results with their counterparts at the three other PBTf Institutes, housed at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada, and the University of California, San Francisco. Current funding of the entire PBTf Institute program stands at \$13 million.

While several PBTf fundraising efforts support this work, most donations come from the Ride for Kids® program, with long-standing sponsorship from the American Honda Motor Company.

About the PBTf

The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTf), a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Asheville, N.C., is the world’s largest non-governmental funder of childhood brain tumor research. Its programs include free educational information about brain tumors, Internet conferences, college scholarships for brain tumor survivors, and Ride for Kids® motorcycle charity events. For more information, visit www.curethekids.org.

PBTF TO BENEFIT FROM CHARITY AUCTION AT MOTORCYCLE HALL OF

To celebrate its new “MotoStars: Celebrities + Motorcycles” exhibit, the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum is offering enthusiasts the opportunity to take home a piece of exhibit-themed memorabilia while supporting a good cause.

The Museum will host a gala charity auction, featuring items donated by notable athletes, musicians, actors, artists, bike builders and industry leaders, on Friday, June 27, 2008.

Proceeds from the auction will benefit donors’ selected charities, including the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTF).

The auction, part of the “MotoStars: Celebrities + Motorcycles” grand opening weekend, will be held at the Museum in Pickerington, Ohio. For those who cannot make the trip to bid live on June 27, the auction will be open online May 21 - June 25, 2008.

Snoopy's Ride for Kids

The first item benefiting PBTF is a “Joe Motocross” Snoopy statue. This unique piece of art, which stands five feet tall, honors legendary “Peanuts” creator Charles M. Schulz, who introduced millions of people to the sport of motocross in the book and movie, “You’re a Good Sport, Charlie Brown.”

Ken and Ruth Chambers, former owners of Jim & Jim’s, a motorcycle shop in Santa Rosa, Calif., donated the statue. The longtime friends of the Schulz family are also longtime fundraisers for the PBTF’s Ride for Kids® program.

“The statue is completely unique, and nothing like it will ever be produced again,” says Ruth Chambers, noting that Charles Schulz’ son Craig designed Snoopy’s helmet, boots and chest protector.

Celebrity Honda also benefits PBTF

The PBTF will also receive proceeds from the auction of a 2006 Honda VTX1300 ridden by actor Francesco Quinn in the Quentin Tarantino-produced biker movie “Hell Ride.”

Awesome Air Show to Fill Skies Over VIR

For the first time in its history the skies over VIRginia International Raceway will echo with the sound of acrobatic aircraft as VIR hosts an acrobatic air show in conjunction with an established auto racing event. “Wings & Wheels” is a new addition to the already successful Heacock Classic Gold Cup Historic Auto Races June 6-7-8, 2008, which this year features “All-American Muscle.”

“Wings & Wheels” will be an automotive festival of street rods, classic muscle cars, motorcycles and sports cars combined with an air show and acrobatic aircraft with some of the finest aerobatic performers in North America.

Virginia International Raceway, described by Paul Newman as “Heaven on Earth,” is a destination for motorsports enthusiasts of all types and is recognized as one of America’s elite road courses. VIR is home to America’s first motorsports country club and is the perfect place for enthusiasts to watch spectacular racing and businesses to entertain guests and clients.

Tickets are available on line at www.virclub.com or by calling the ticket office at 434-822-7700. Directions to the track and accommodations information are also available on-line. VIR is little more than an hour drive from both the Piedmont Triad and Triangle areas of North Carolina.

For more information call Ron Crable at 336-580-4477 or Kenny May at 434-822-7700, ext. 114.

Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF)

The cherry blossoms near the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) office in Washington aren't the only tell tale signs that riding season is upon us.

Springtime is also when the media begins to report on motorcycling, and more often than not they don't report on the vast number of positive aspects of motorcycling. Instead they choose to attempt to sour the image of motorcycling by painting a picture that motorcyclists are a social burden on the backs of the American taxpayer.

Critics and the uninformed believe that motorcyclists; helmeted or not, account for a super majority of health care costs from trauma rooms to long-term care. The problem is that's just not true. Not a lot of study has been done on the subject, but there is more than enough research out there to soundly and logically deflate the social burden myth.

The Journal of American Medicine, one of the most respected of all medical publications, published the findings of a 1988 study on the subject of the public costs of motorcycle-related injuries at a specific Seattle hospital. The results clearly showed that, on average for motorcycle-injured patients, 63.4 percent of their medical bills was paid out with taxpayer dollars. Admittedly that's an astoundingly high cost, but what the study goes on to say is that the average public cost of ANY injury at that same Seattle treatment center was 67 percent, 3.6 percent higher. A statistical dead heat.

There is also a little more to that story because generally the public cost of health care is about 45 percent currently, and it was significantly less than that in the mid eighties when the study was conducted. The facility used for the study was Harborview, a division of the University of Washington and one of the largest and most state of the art facilities in the Seattle region that sees most of the area's worst case scenarios routinely.

A similar study done by the University of North Carolina also found that there was no statistical

difference in public cost to treat motorcycle-related injuries over any other type of injury. Also important to keep things in perspective, last year the public share of motorcycle-related injuries was .001 percent of the entire public healthcare cost.

Then why are they making motorcyclists look like leeches on society?

Usually it's an attempt to advance helmet laws or other restrictions on motorcycling. Those on that mission would be wrong to say that helmeted riders are much less of a financial burden than unhelmeted riders.

According to a 1996 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study, the unhelmeted riders generated a cost difference of 8 cents on the dollar more than helmeted riders, and most of that was paid for by private insurance.

So what have we learned? That the next time someone argues for the social burden theory, we can let him or her know that it's pure bunk.

One Month to the Bosch Engineering 250 at VIR

The Bosch Engineering 250 at VIR Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16 race for the Daytona Prototype and GT classes is only a month away!

There is still plenty of time to order spectator tickets but get your orders in soon, so you can plan on the most thrilling weekend of sports car racing yet at VIR's classic Full Course. This 3.27-mile track features straights of up to 4000 feet, 130 feet of elevation change and twists and turns that challenge the skills of the world's best road racers. Celebrated drivers already entered include J.C. France, of the NASCAR France family; Scott Pruett, Trans-Am and Indy car winner; several past Formula One drivers and actor Patrick Dempsey is entered in the GT category, driving a Mazda RX-8 for the Hyper Sport team from Norcross, Ga. Dempsey enjoys racing: "coming here is a great release," he said last October. "It's like a vacation."

The exotic Prototypes and their production GT cousins race in the feature 250-mile race but there is lots more action for fans, with the inaugural race in the brand-new Volkswagen Jetta TDI Cup series; the BF Goodrich/Skip Barber National presented by Mazda open-wheeled racers; the SunTrust MotoST super twin motorcycles and the SCCA Speed Touring Car championships all taking to the track and adding to the excitement. The Jetta TDI Cup introduces Volkswagen's new TDI Diesel cars in the first racing series certified as "Carbon Free" by CarbonFund.org, taking VIR another step toward the future of motorsports.

The biggest addition to the weekend's action is the first East Coast appearance of the Society of Automotive Engineers' Formula SAE Collegiate Design Series. Pitting college engineering schools against each other to design and build the best small formula cars, FSAE rewards engineering excellence; efficiency; handling; overall design and acceleration. Rules limit the use of exotic materials and methods, challenging the creativity and imagination of the student teams. An international collection of universities will be bringing their entries to VIR, with cars expected from Virginia Tech, Old Dominion University, North Carolina State, Georgia Tech, MIT and even the US Air Force Academy. So college alumni should come out and root for their favorite engineering team.

Fans that buy tickets on-line by April 15 will be eligible to win all kinds of exciting additions to the Bosch Engineering Weekend including:

- Pace car rides in a two-seat race Volkswagen Jetta TDI Cup car that is the sister car to the cars in the TDI Cup race
- Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates, winners of the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona, is creating a truly special program for a lucky fan. Selected lucky fans will be part of the team's "Pit Crew Experience," allowing them to see the race and pit action from inside the team's pit stall.
- Pace car rides as they lead the field to the green flag.
- One free hour of karting at VIR's Plantation Valley Kart Track, at which fans can try their skills on the exciting 9hp go-karts.

"These are just some of the extras that we hope will make the Bosch Engineering 250 an even more special weekend for our fans," said track general manager Josh Lief. "VIR is a special place and these special attractions will make the weekend a truly memorable one for several lucky fans."

Richmond Riders Motorcycle Club

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Richmond Ride for Kids Sets New Fundraising Record

It was a spectacular Sunday morning in Richmond, Va., as 350 motorcyclists and supporters raised a whopping **\$122,320** at the sixth annual Richmond Ride for Kids®. The event, which benefited the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTf), smashed its previous fundraising record by 30 percent.

First Lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia Anne Holton was at the start point in Glen Allen for Ride for Kids® Day in Virginia. She sent the police-escorted ride on a countryside tour that finished at the Richmond Times Dispatch facility in Mechanicsville.



Minutes from May Meeting

Jerry called the meeting to order and Henry reported that the club's treasury has an available balance of \$643.00 .

Ride report: June 22 is ride to Staunton, VA. Leave at 8:30 am from McDonald's on
Route 6. 3 miles west of Parham Road.

. July 27 ride will be to Nottingham Restaurant in Rawlings, VA 135 mile
ride.

August 24 ride will be to the Crazy Crab in Reedville, VA.

Dinner rides are the 1st Thursday and the 4th Wednesday of each month. .

He is also looking for places to go and for ride leaders.

Tony Sheets and Tony Bennardo were guests at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

\$3,623.75 for the R4K on 1 Jun 08. John, Anne and Wayne will help disperse the money at the R4K.

The Governor has declared 1 Jun 08 as Ride 4 Kids day in the Commonwealth of Virginia.