

5 in 1 High Altitude Poker Run

Well! PJ, David, Wayne, Shina, Ben, Holly, and I all officially belong to the Pikes Peak HOG's High Altitude Club. In one day we rode 5 mountain passes that exceed 10,000 feet covering 323 miles in 10 hours from start to finish without stopping for lunch. Bikers from all over the United States came to participate. They were from Key West FL, New York, Texas, Minnesota, Nevada, Oklahoma, Arizona, and Illinois just to name a few. In comparison, last year's 5 in 1 had about 200 bikes and this year it was over 400. What an exciting time and ride. We ended up covering a total of 734 miles in the three days. But, let me go back to the beginning.

Seven of us on six bikes left Grand Junction Friday, July 19th at 9:20AM heading south on Hwy 50 through Gunnison, over Monarch, through Canon City and then north along Hwy 115 into Colorado Springs. A couple of times we had to put on some kind of rain gear, but only for a short time then we were out of it. At our last rest stop the weather was looking real dark in an area that was headed our way. We decided not to hang around any longer and headed to the Pikes Peak Dealership without delay. It is a good thing we did because as we pulled into the parking lot it started to sprinkle and came down harder as we got inside the dealership—we made it.

Greeting us with a very warm welcome was Mark McGee, the Assistant Director of the PPHOG Chapter. He also stated that he and Charlie Ford (the road captain featured in last year's HOG Magazine article covering the 5 in 1 that got me started in putting this together) would be taking a group leaving at 6:20AM. We told him that we would like to be in their group and he said, "Good, be here at 5:30AM." "Be here at 5:30!!!" was a comment with some moans and groans from those who do not like getting up early. Let's see, if we have to be there by 5:30, that means we have to get up by *&#;\$%^. The hotel doesn't even have its breakfast ready that early. Mark said not to worry they would have coffee and pastries at the dealership waiting for us.

We did manage to arrive the next morning around 5:35AM, or so. We picked up our packets, grabbed some coffee, found Mark, and stage our bikes inside of him and Charlie's staging area. (Note: Each road captain pair had a staging area and was leaving every 10 minutes with a group of 10 bikes. This all started at 5:30AM and continued until everyone was gone.) Mark told us we would leave at 6:20 sharp, so we had a little time to get more coffee, donuts and just hang out.



Where's the coffee?

There were storm clouds all around us, but Mark pointed to a clearing spot in the direction of our first stop and said we would be fine. Charlie also predicted that in spite of how it looked, we would have good weather all day. Course he also added "don't hold me to it." Our group consisted of our six bikes, three from the PPHOG, and two from Key West FL.



Charlie Ford (left) & Mark McGee (right)

While we were waiting for our group's pre-ride briefing a few of the PPHOG road captains looked over all the bikes to make sure they were safe. They saw that Wayne's front tire was pretty worn. Wayne knew it was close to needing replaced, but did think it would make the trip. Mark and Wayne decided to keep an eye on it and if it appeared to get bad they would have Wayne move to the back of the group right in front of Mark, who was the sweep. Charlie was the lead and gave us a very informative pre-ride briefing (learned a new hand signal for deer warning) and then we were off. Our first pass was going to be Victor.

We may not have had bad weather, but it was very cool and even got a lot cooler as we got higher. Some of us put on another layer when we reached Victor. It was very beautiful at Victor, Cripple Creek, and the surround area. Wayne's tire was beginning to show more wear so he moved to the back and rode in front of Mark for the rest of the day. At each stop they would check his tire. They said that if it got dangerously bad he could head straight to Glenwood. But, it never reached that point.

In fact Wayne made it all the way home —although more than a little nervous throughout the day as well as the ride home.

At any rate our next pass was Hoosier followed by Loveland, Fremont, and then Independence. As you know Colorado has some of the most beautiful country to ride in, and we got all of it —high beautiful mountains with steep winding switchback roads to a long straight stretch with nothing on either side that seemed to go forever. We had very cool weather to begin with then warming up as the day progressed. Even though it would be warmer at the lower elevations it was still a little cool on the passes, so we only dressed down a little (for example fall gloves rather than winter gloves) until we reached the top of Independence Pass where we did dress down knowing that it was the last pass and that it was going to get real warm real quick. And it did just that —very warm to hot as we got close to and rode into Glenwood.



The seven of us

The after party was at Big Daddy's Bar and Grill and it was packed full of people inside and out. After the big group picture they announced the winners. No one in our group won anything so we left to get something to eat somewhere less crowded. After dinner we went back to the motel where we had our own after party by the hot tub.



We made it!



Boy! That tasted good —nice & cold.

Sunday morning after sleeping in a little we went to breakfast and then headed home already looking to next year's 5 in 1 Poker Run. Which by-the-way will be the third weekend in July, so pencil that weekend on your calendars. They do not know yet what 5 passes they will go over, but we are certain it will be just as good a ride and as enjoyable as this one was.



Big Group picture (not all 400 though)

In the Big Group picture I know you probably can't see us, but locate the guy with the big white buffalo horns in the upper right $\frac{3}{4}$ of the picture below arrow. I am behind and to the left of him; Ben, Holly, and Shina are standing on the ledge behind him; David is behind me; and Wayne is behind and to right of him.

To view all of the pictures, visit their website at the following link.

<http://pikespeakharleyownersgroup.com/galleryRides2013.htm>

If you would like to know more I am sure any of the seven new High Altitude Club members would be glad to tell you more about it.

So, on behalf of the High Altitude Club members from the Western Slope Chapter I submit this article for your enjoyment and hope to entice you to participate next year.

Gordon