

Rolling Thru America...



...Maine

by Don Gomo

Last year the folks of Americade launched a sister company to specialize in smaller-scale tours, and kicked off the project with an

event based in Burlington, VT over the Labor Day weekend, aptly named "Rolling Through Vermont." That turned out to be a

great success and attendees ended the weekend looking forward to returning the next year. Well, this year the folks changed

the name a bit to "Rolling Thru America." With that the Vermont event returned for the Labor Day holiday plus the addition of a new

event, “Rolling Thru Maine” (RTM) a couple of weeks later in September.

After enjoying last year’s Vermont trip so much I would have loved to do both, but my personal schedule made me have to choose to do only one, so with it being a new event – Maine won the toss. Once again Christian Dutcher and his merry staff members Margie, Nora and Stacey put together a great-looking itinerary and registration package for the weekend that had me really anticipating the great riding and scenery ahead. So, what did they have

to offer that would entice you to sign up and head north, especially at a time of year when the weather can be very unpredictable temperature-wise? Remember that we are heading to an event in Maine, where temperatures at times drop to the 40’s at night in September, with only a slight raise during the day (which fortunately wasn’t the case for our weekend).

The weekend would start off for us on a Thursday evening; I actually headed up from Long Island, NY on Wednesday with my girlfriend, Lisa, and stayed a night in



Hampton Beach, NH. Before I continue with the Maine information (Get it? “Main” information? That’s a joke, son. – Sorry, I just enjoy Foghorn Leghorn), Hampton Beach was a nice resort town. Even though it was a late Wednesday evening when we arrived, the tempera-

tures were still summer-like and there were plenty of places still open at the end of their season. We were fortunate to be able to witness a beautiful sunrise the next morning, enjoy some jolting java and then pack up to head to Bath, ME. Along the way we stopped at Seacoast



Harley-Davidson for a little browsing and shopping, and while there we were told about a great place that served the best fried clams in the region, Bob's Clam Hut in Kittery, which was just at the New Hampshire/Maine border and

on our route heading north. A scheduled lunch stop was now in order, and when we arrived we were not disappointed – great clams. After lunch we continued north on US 1 and while in route we passed a drydocked submarine by



Portsmouth that was now a touring museum. Being a former bubble-head (submariner), I made a U-turn and went to check the boat out. Lisa was also curious to check out part of my past. Although the submarine was smaller than the one I was sta-



tioned on all those years ago, the memory of being on one came back real quick. They were certainly cramped for space, plus I think I was a bit smaller in size back in those days. The rest of the day we just spent meandering small coastal towns until we reached Bath in the evening.

Ok, now back to the event; Thursday evening had all the attendees, around 100 folks, headed across the street from the hotel to the Kennebec Tavern for great dinner and to be updated of the weekend's events/rides by Christian and his RTM staff.

Plus, it was an opportunity to mingle with folks and get a little history of our new riding companions. There was a prediction for rain but most of the forecasts stated that the liquid sky should be gone by the morning.

Well, Friday morning had us waking up to rain, a bit heavy at times but it actually rolled out just about the time we were scheduled to depart for the days ride. The staff opted to delay our departure for about 30 minutes to let the storm work its way a bit further from us, then after a group riders' meeting conducted by the ride



leaders we headed out in two waves for the day. Our first stop was at the Pemaquid Point Lighthouse; one of two we would visit for the day. The sights from the park were everything you would picture a lighthouse on the

Maine coast to be: grassy hilltop setting for the house overlooking the infamous rocky coast with waves crashing onto the shoreline. We were able to climb up to the top of the lighthouse in small groups as well as



check out the small museum with history of the residence. After time spent checking things out and snapping tons of photos we were instructed to mount up to be lead to the Lobster Pound for lunch, which over-

looked the Penobscot bay - again another satisfying meal. After lunch we had the option of checking out views of the village and seacoast from the top of the Camden Hills State Park or just head into Camden (which

would be our post-lunch departure point) to stroll around. We decided to check out the state park before heading into town so we wandered up the roadway that lead us up to the top. Now, so far we have been lucky and have not dealt with any rain for the day, but things were overcast. By the time we arrived on the hilltop, we left just riding around in overcast areas to what seemed like we climbed right into the clouds. It was misty and visibility was really limited, so back down the hill we went to go to the village of Camden.

After spending some time roaming the quaint tourist/fishing village of Camden we were rounded up to travel to another scenic lighthouse. We arrived at the Marshall Point Lighthouse and if it seemed to be a familiar sight, it was. Remember the part of the movie "Forrest Gump" when Forrest started his almost never-ending cross-county run? Well, this was the lighthouse that was his east coast farpoint. After spending some time to enjoy the scenery, our ride leaders and staff brought us back to our hotel in Bath where we had the

“night off” to enjoy the restaurants and the town, which was only a minute’s walk from the hotel. Plus, it gave us time with some of our newly-met riding partners. To make things even better, we ended the day without riding through any rain.

Saturday was scheduled for some more riding, but the day was starting off struggling for the sun to break through. Our first stop was to be in Boothbay Harbor; one could have spent hours exploring, maybe even a whole weekend with all the shops and side streets the village had to offer. We were lead

over some great shoreline routes before we arrived in Boothbay for our strolling time and lunch break. Our parking spot for the village was close to the restaurant for lunch, but it also gave us the occasion to walk across a 500-ft pedestrian bridge over the harbor to get into town.

By now it should go without saying that our lunch was another delicious meal. I tried not to overeat because I knew we were heading down to Portland where a private cruise on the Casco Bay was chartered to deliver us to Peaks Island for a traditional Maine *lob-*



stah bake picnic. The cruise itself was picturesque, plus the sights and history were narrated by our cruise captain during our journey back and forth from Peaks Island. After arriving at the island, everyone headed to our late lunch/early

dinner stop to feast on what Maine is known for – it’s *lobstah*, and tasty it was. Our day ended up with us coming back home to Bath for another relaxing evening. We spent the time that night hanging out with new friends talking about the



events and rides over the past two days and how much we all enjoyed our time.

Sunday morning had us returning to where the event started, the Keenebec Tavern across the street for breakfast, farewells

and even a chance for some door prizes donated by Tourmaster and Americade. Christian and his RTM Staff wrapped things up with some more information and stated that Rolling Thru America will be again planning for the

Vermont and Maine events for 2011, and possibly a third location to be added for the year as well. After breakfast you had the option of being lead homeward for the first 75 miles by the staff, a nice touch that the staff did last year that I have never seen anyone else do.

I can tell you that I once again enjoyed my time during the event. Great roads, scenery, people, food and the staff itself help make this another memorable riding weekend that I can enjoy and talk about for days to come. Christian Dutcher and his Rolling

thru America Staff are certainly positioning themselves to be one of the premier touring organizations for small scale, all-inclusive motorcycle tours. I will without a doubt plan on being part of one of their events for next year and if I am lucky enough to work it out, I'll do them all. If you enjoy all the things reviewed as part of your motorcycling journeys, then Rolling Thru America is worth you checking out and adding an event to your riding calendar.

Check out:
<http://www.rollingthru-america.com>

-- Gomo