

Highway to Heaven Hill Climb and Millersburg

Contributed by Evelyn
Wednesday, 20 August 2008
Last Updated Thursday, 21 August 2008

Highway to Heaven Hill Climb, Ellicott City, MD & Millersburg Stage Race, PA
August 16-17, 2008

The TT had a good representation from Artemis. Barry Wilcox brought out his gaggle of kids to start racing. In addition to Barry racing the 50+, Buddy winning the 15-16, and Josh coming in 2nd in the 13-14, Emma and Benjamin (both 10-12) made their debut! Mona wanted to back out, but I reminded her that "Even a 10-year old can do it!" With that said, Mona ended up doing the TT twice on a borrowed bike.

Liz and Sheila made a special appearance, and Linh and Julie crushed for 1st & 2nd in the Cat 4 Women. Looks like Julie is on the comeback trail after her surgery earlier in the season. Speaking of comebacks, Paul Rades is back on the bike after his broken elbow at the Murad Road Race, and set a sub-4 minute time! Wow!

Kudos also goes out to MM (Margaret) for doing the TT THREE times! (Men 50+, Women 40+, & Cat 4 Women), and all of the others who did it twice: Zoe, Mona, Mike M., Sheila.

Now for Millersburg! It was a great week-end. Millersburg is this really cool old town that edges the Susquehanna River about ½ hour north of Harrisburg. The sunset along the river was beautiful. They have this historical paddle boat ferry that crosses the river; one of the few (or only?) ones left in the US. There were no traffic lights and the road courses were excellent. Everyone was pleasant and helpful. There are only a few hotels in the area, and we had 3 rooms in one of them. A lot of others were in Host Housing, even with Amish families, and have great stories to tell! The promoter, Shane, seems like a really nice and enthusiastic guy, and did a fantastic job of getting the whole town on board. People that we met were sorry that THEY didn't offer their houses, but promised to next year. Everyone in town that we encountered went out of their way to give the racers as much as they could. I saw a house that I just LOVED and I happened to meet the owner the next day, just in passing. "I'm staying there next year!"

We arrived on Friday night and went to a hosted dinner by the promoter where Bob Roll spoke. It was fun; Bob thinks he's a stand-up comedian. Funny. It was odd, because the gazebo that we were under starting filling up with BATS! There were bats swooping all over while Bobke was speaking, but no one seemed to mind. Then they all decided that there was nothing good there and they all flew away. We also watched this big, beautiful full moon rise over the golf course.

We got up early on Saturday and it was pretty chilly and foggy. PA weather is not like our muggy DC air. Bobke was there to see us off at the start and I think that some of us girls embarrassed him a little, but all in good fun. The 12-mile TT was an out-and-back course. The course ran along the railroad (and the river beyond that, but who had a chance to look), and was lightly rolling. Mike Githens won the TT for the 123 Men.

Next was the crit. It was a long course that went around the High School and then through town. There were a few tight turns and a stretch that went past a Retirement Home. The Old Folks were sitting outside cheering all day! Before the start/finish a gradual rise begins that goes on through a chicane. Nothing hard, but it will wear on you. Amanda had a decent finish for the women. Mike was supposed to shelter himself to maintain his GC position, but got caught in the pack in the last turn before the sprint, which subsequently crashed. Mike was OK, but cooked a nice carbon tubular wheel.

That evening, there was another hosted event with Bob Roll, where we had beer and munchies. This is where we all got out photo-op with him. We then went to dinner in town to one of the few restaurants, Wayne's. They still allow smoking in PA restaurants and we ended up outside on a small back patio. It was perfect for us! Wayne, himself, kept coming out to check on us and talk even though it was incredibly busy inside. It must have been the 6 attractive women drawing him out!

The Road Race was on Sunday. It was a nice rolling 18-mile loop that, for the most part, had a rolling enclosure. It was again, another beautiful day; a bit warmer than the day before. The big Amish family that hosted the C-3 Ladies, were

perched along this precarious downhill turn cheering for the racers as they sped by, giving the lead riders an excuse stay ahead. The feed zone was right on Main Street just before the finish line, so it was convenient for spectators and feeders, alike. The promoter supplied designated volunteers to feed (in case that you didn't have your own) and not only provided the water, but cookie feeds! They also provided wraps for food after each race. Jen and Amanda fared very well in the race considering Jen launched two attacks during the race and Amanda was still experiencing flexor pain. MA finished with her group, too. Ramon ended up if the front group of the 123 Men and finished well, but the dynamics of that race seemed to have changed each lap.

Overall, a fun week-end. Everyone who raced vowed to return again next year…AND to bring even more women! To end our visit to Millersburg, we decided to take the ferry across the river and try a different route home. It was VERY kew! We met up with this guy, Rich, who had raced and was headed up to State College. He was fun and a good sport with us Girls. We also got a good education on the ferry and area history from our Captain, who seemed to be mildly interested in what this bike racing thing was all about!