



Empire City MC's Vermont Weekend Getaway

Wow... just wow. You couldn't ask for better weather, better men, better food or nicer roads to spend an extended weekend in the Vermont and New Hampshire Green & White Mountain Region!

On Friday, 14th August, instead of heading up to Montréal Gay Pride, which wasn't just cancelled but the border to Canada has been closed to Americans, we went to Gargoyle House, a clothing-optional gay men's bed and breakfast, owned by Ron, a gay biker himself. As you read in last week's newsletter, we sold out the house in 24 hours. Even after we had one cancellation two days before departure, another was waiting in the wings to take their place! The primary contingent departed NYC at 10am from the upper east side, taking the parkways until reaching I-91 in Connecticut. Traffic was light, but there were a few motorcycle-hating jerks on the road, whom we mitigated. Besides fuel, our first stop was at a recreational marijuana dispensary in Massachusetts. In Vermont, pot is now legal to grow, smoke and give away (no payment/bartering), but you cannot sell nor buy it as there are no tax laws in place to allow for that yet. So, we stopped in Massachusetts to a hippie-run marijuana dispensary (a fantastic place with really nice people) it's all legal in Massachusetts – every evening when the riding was over, there was an enclosed porch on the upper floor for smoking. Many of us would gather there before and after dinner and imbibe in our purchases and enjoy each other's company.



Saturday featured a loop ride led by our Road Captain Erik through New Hampshire, visiting Chutter's Candy, home of the world's largest candy counter. Then it was on to Mt Washington, which has an auto road up to the top – all of it has no guard rails and some of it unpaved! After we finished using up several rolls of digital "film" up there, we headed back down for a light lunch and then it was on to the Kancamagus Highway, but we took the road less travelled getting there – we turned west in North Conway, avoiding all the congestion of Conway and ride tree-lined paved roads to a covered bridge which put us right onto the scenic highway. We had two stops on the Kancamagus: The lower falls recreation area, which allowed people to wade in the Swift River. All the boulders smoothed slick over the years of water flowing over them – a beautiful sight.

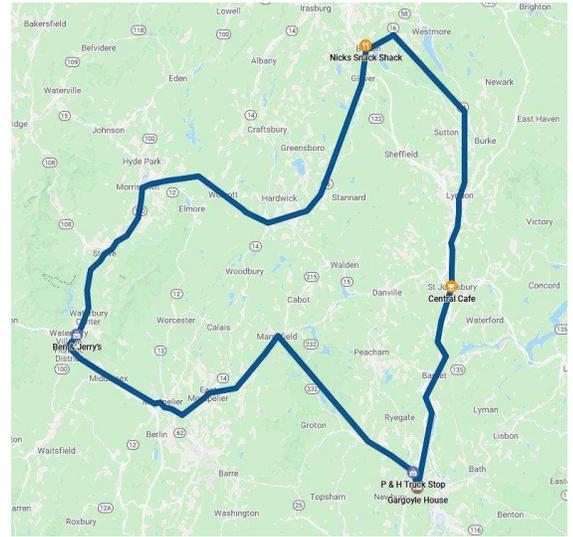


Then it was on to Sabaday Falls, a short 500-metre (0.3-mile) trail from the car park up a moderate incline until you reached the falls, tucked away in the woods. A striking and beautiful waterfall, created by nature and surrounded by bridges and paths so you could see every aspect of it without disturbing the natural beauty. From there, it was back to Gargoyle House where dinner would be ready soon!



We stayed on the same highway as the Kancamagus beyond Lincoln, NH which is a gorgeous, fresh-paved, winding road with a creek that flows beside it, terminating at route 302, which would take us back to Vermont.

Sunday was Ron's ride! Ron, the owner and proprietor of Gargoyle House let us on an all-day ride in Vermont, taking some roads most Vermont residents don't know about! After being on these twisting roads for about 90 minutes, we arrived at Ben & Jerry's manufacturing plant. Although COVID-19 has halted the museum and the factory tours, the scoop shop was open and we all enjoyed ice cream and a stroll through the "dead flavour graveyard". From there, we went further north and had lunch at Nick's Snack Shack which had really good burgers and fried cheese curds – yum! Then we started heading south and east to get back to Gargoyle House – but not before pulling up with all our bikes and leather-clad bikers to Central Café, a gay-owned coffee shop. Following our visit, I heard later that the owner who was working at the shop that day developed a wet spot from all the butch leatherman who suddenly appeared at his shop! Mission accomplished! It was back home after that.



On Monday morning, many of us checked out and planned our respective and mutual rides home. Some stayed, extending their getaway weekend into a much longer trip! Be sure to read about Lewis and Tim's experiences further in this newsletter!

To be honest to the nay-sayers who didn't go because the weather looked chancy, on our way home, we did hit some rain on the Merritt Parkway for about 15 minutes and we got a little wet, but others who went via I-95 avoided the single storm system the others hit. All-in-all, we can't complain about the weather at all and we all look forward to returning to Gargoyle House and New England soon!

An EXTENDED Vermont Weekend Getaway!

Although action-packed with lots of riding and comradery (there are nearly 200 photos and videos on Empire City MC's facebook page in the Photos -> Albums area) for only four days of this extended weekend getaway, some of our guests and members decided to not immediately return home and hung out in New England visiting spots such as Ogunquit, Maine and Provincetown, Massachusetts. Below are the stories of the extended travels of Lewis and Tim:

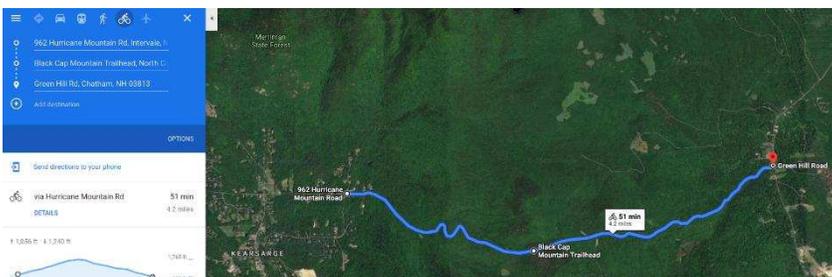
I wanted to (again) express thanks to Chaz, Ron and all of you guys for making it the memorable adventure of the year... so far, anyway.

Also wanted to report on my return trip. As you know, we returned to Pittsburgh via Maine and Provincetown, sort of the long way around and a total of 2,144 miles. Here are the highlights, of moto interest:

Hurricane Mountain: We left Gargoyle House and took RT-302 and rode around the other side of Mt. Washington, by the Bretton Woods resort. Leaving the White Mountains and reaching the town of Intervale, there was a roadside information stop where I pulled in next to a friendly biker from Maine. I inquired about any scenic routes toward the coast, and he



recommended Hurricane Mountain road, the intersection of which I had passed a couple hundred feet back. It ended up being second only to the climb up Mt. Washington, and less expensive. A gate at each end warned that it was not for trucks or RVs, it

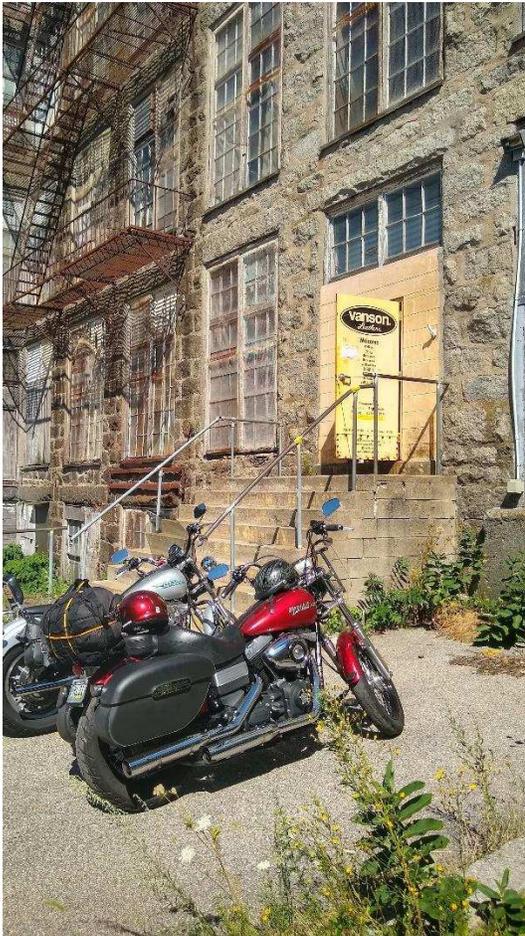


was about a lane and a half wide, fresh smooth asphalt. Above is a screen-cap of the route, the bicycle option it turned on to show the terrain change. It was more fun than a roller coaster, but less safe. Whenever you're in the area again, you need to give it a go.

Ogunquit and P-town, I admit that my prime motivation for the visit, was that I had yet not set foot in Maine and "firsts" are a bit hard to come by at my age.

We explored a bit and ate steamed lobsters, because it's Maine!

As visiting P-town would be a first for Tim, we headed out Tuesday morning and arrived early afternoon. Having visited on the bike before, I know it to be a moto-unfriendly place, with no place to park without feeling gouged. Thanks to Tim, the social one, we made a connection to a fellow who had a home right in the centre of town, with a narrow driveway space next to a tenant's car, perfect for the bike. He was a welcoming host and tour guide for the rest of our stay... talk to Tim if you want to know more.



Vanson Leather: If you want U.S. made leather, your options are really limited these days. As our next leg took us right through Fall River, I knew we had to stop at the Vanson factory and showroom. If you're expecting something like North Bound or Mr. S, this is not the place. This is serious leather for serious bikers, custom racing leathers dominate. You can judge their quality and durability by looking at the crashed suits on display, and there are plenty of "good deals" if you happen to be the right size and style preference. They will happily measure you for custom leathers, and can suit you whether you want a multicolour one-piece racing suit or something more Tom of Finland style. Even though we were just passing through and checking it out, we were treated well. Since March they have added a line of masks, sewn in-house with ties instead of elastic, easier on your ears whether for riding or everyday use.

Finally, we look forward to welcoming at least some of you to Pittsburgh over the Labour Day weekend. Even if you stay down near California, we are putting together a ride (option) to visit the highlights of the city; the rivers, bridges and vistas that make it what it is. See you then!

-- Lewis and Tim

Just Wear Your Fucking Mask!

Politics has been on the forefront of everything this year – from other bikers wearing TRUMP 2020 shirts with a thinly veiled threat that if Trump does not win, they will “vote from the rooftops with their rifles!” Honestly, I've avoided most politics in Rumblings as this is not meant to be a political soapbox, yet, as a gay men's organisation, we must acknowledge that it seems the republicans want us dead – not just now, but going back to the AIDS crisis under Ronald Reagan – perhaps further! The only point to this article is that wearing a mask isn't political – it's really just mutual respect. If we all wore masks and stayed inside two weeks, this virus might die out! It's not about MAGA, Bernie, Trump or Biden, it's about our lives. Please wear your mask in public. ...and please do your part and vote on November 3rd!! Our lives depend upon it and this general election, every vote matters!

The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride is "Solo" this year...

This year, The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride will not be taking place due to COVID-19... Well, it will and it won't. This year they are doing the DGR as a "solo event". What does this mean? You raise money and give it to them and then ride on your own – not with a group. We really feel they are 'calling it in' by doing it like this and because of this change, we have taken it off of our events listing.

There is no police escorted ride, no camaraderie, no packs of motorcycles riding all over New York City at once. It's very disappointing, as motorcycling is naturally socially-distancing, as Empire City MC has proven all this riding season – there's no reason they needed to neuter this event like this, they could have mitigated COVID-19 by enforcing mask-wearing at the start and end points. I fear that if they raise enough money, they might just keep this event model forever, destroying the fun there is with DGR. I feel the only way to send a clear message to them that this is not acceptable for a motorcycle event is to NOT PARTICIPATE this year.

'New York City' is Cancelled

On 25th August, there was an article in the New York Times by Juliana Kim entitled "Is New York City 'Over'?" (you can read the article at <https://j.mp/3gsCHu1>). Another article referenced is "Movers in N.Y.C. Are So Busy They're Turning People Away" <https://j.mp/2YzuZln>.



The heart of the matter is that, like so many other large metropolitan cities, New York City has allowed capitalism and greed dictate the cost of living here and it's been driven up so high, we have something called "[working homeless](#)" in where people are employed, but can not afford housing, so they sleep rough. Want assisted housing (council housing)?

Get in line. You'll be waiting for over ten years unless you find a housing lottery that draws your name.

Over the past 40 years, "starving artists" and other wonderfully creative individuals and communities that once made NYC a place of diverse nature have all been priced out of the market (read: their homes) as gentrification takes over neighbourhoods. On the business side, many "Mom & Pop" shops struggled to compete *before COVID-19*, so how can they stay afloat now? They aren't.

The exciting and semi-attractive night-life scene has all been crushed with far too much state and corporation surveillance, not to mention the "Disneyfication" of New York City under the control of the conservative mayor Rudy Guiliani to make it more "family-friendly".

Gone are the antics at The Mineshaft, The Piers, The Trucks, The L.U.R.E., all the famous bathhouses, many leather stores and so much more... New York was a great city even in its worst of times, such as the garbage strike or when the city went bankrupt, but today it's just another boring world-class city like Toronto, London or Los Angeles. Brand-name stores litter the land and landlords/developers rape people for as much as they can for shoddily-built "deluxe" condos and shoebox apartments. If you want to live in Chelsea on the "cheap" (one of the predominantly gay neighbourhoods in NYC), you can now rent a 7² metre (78² ft) for \$1,300/month with a shared washroom. This is NOT a typo – see the video here: <https://j.mp/3lglFOp>



We were already struggling to survive the increasing costs of living in New York City here *before COVID-19 came along*. Add the fact that in a dense population such as we have in NYC or L.A., illness spreads like wildfire. Wealthy folks with second or more homes ran away (many taking the virus with them) to the Hamptons, Catskills, Westchester and beyond... abandoning their NYC digs with plans to come back when the dust clears. Newsflash: The dust isn't clearing anytime soon folks!

Cities are wonderful places for many reasons: good public transit (so you don't need an auto to get around), critical mass which creates an international flair for everyone, living in condos and apartments is far more "green" than sprawling suburbs, the arts, the clubs, the universities, the people, the museums, the attractions and more! But, as always, the rich have found a way to monopolise on city-dwellers. Predatory landlords and developers have all must destroyed the chance at living here for any less than 50-70% of your total net income (an insane amount).

There is a lot of unemployment now, a lot of sickness everywhere, a lot of debt and New York is breaking under the strain. Our federal government isn't helping enough, since we are viewed as a "liberal city" whom they wish to "punish" by withholding emergency funds. The MTA (our public transit system) is in dire straits from the piling debt of having to operate without passenger revenue. All these factors are making people move out. If you walk around Manhattan in the residential areas, you'll notice many moving vans are being filled up – but few are unloading.

With the mass exodus from NYC, some of the new deluxe condominiums have less than 35% occupancy; however, rent and housing costs are not going down – and frankly, many landlords can't reduce rents as they have to pay off huge mortgages (payable to the big banks) on those properties and no condo developers/owners want to be the first one to reduce the price on their property, as it will pop the bubble and cause a crisis like never seen before as the value of property in NYC tumbles.

How will New York City create the revenue it needs to pull itself out of the huge debt they have created? With so many unemployed, raising taxes on the common man won't do it and the wealthy have ample resources to bend the rules, shelter their income, or like Donald Trump did last year, move away. AARP (the American Association of Retired Persons) have been advising that Florida (and a handful of other states that do not tax retirement income) are the place to go (NH and AK are looking good!)

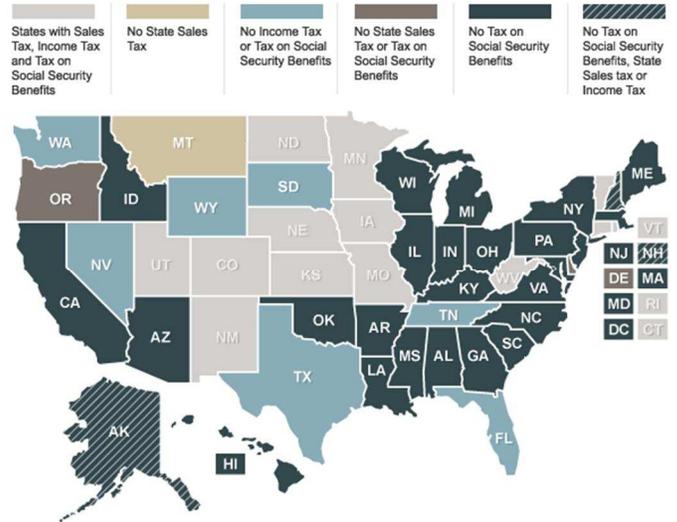
I have been trying to lead a rallying call called [#RedToBlue](#) to encourage liberal gay men to move to red counties in red states, as our votes count much more there than here in "liberal NYC". If we plan it right, we could completely screw up all the things the conservatives have done to prevent us from influencing elections such as gerrymandering and the United States Electoral College.

So, has the time come for you to move to greener pastures? New York City will probably never recover within our lifetime (if ever).

Where would you to move to and why? Join the conversation at <http://facebook.empirecitymc.com/>

Taxes by State

See which states do not have income tax, sales tax or taxes on Social Security.



Source: State tax departments, CCH, the Tax Foundation, Kiplinger, the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

GRAPHIC: AARP Digital Design



On a political side note: Many people blame Donald Trump and his administration for failing to listen to scientists about COVID-19; however, the real blame lies with the people that elected these people in the first place for all the wrong reasons. Just as Hitler should never have come to power with only 33% of the popular vote, Trump now sits on the toilet in the White House constantly tweeting an endless barrage of lies idolising leaders like Putin and Kim Jong-un and wishing he was dictator of America for life.

There are consequences for every action/lack of action taken – and by not voting, or not speaking out against discrimination, racism and police brutality or looking the other way when a school is shot up with an AK-47 have come to roost on the doorstep of America. It's time that we woke up and took action.



In Next Month's Newsletter: Empire City MC's Extended Labour Day Weekend Pennsylvania Tour!

UPCOMING EVENTS & RIDES

Some Featured Rides & Events:

Sat 12th September: EVENT: MotoAmerica at New Jersey Motorsports Park. During these unprecedented times, we are looking to help find normalcy in the motorcycle world and in our own. Let's share our love of bikes and go out to the races. MotoAmerica Superbikes are coming to New Jersey Motorsports Park 11th-13th September, 2020.

Fri 25th – Sun 27th September: RIDE: Rainbow Mountain Motorcycle Weekend [under development]

Fri 2nd – Sun 4th October: RIDE: Cheesecake to Cheesesteak! A ride from NYC to visit our brothers in Philadelphia, PA with accommodations for members at Gary's and Earl's. Contact Erik (Road Captain) for more information about the ride portion and Gary about accommodation options and activities in Philly!

Wed 7th October, 20:00 – 21:00: MEETING: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month now hosted via teleconference due to COVID-19. All motorcyclists are welcome to participate. Attend our Open General Meeting with your computer at: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/959200515?pwd=NVVja2tZd0pndzFuU1hWaEZZRC84dz09>

Fri 9th – Mon 12th October: EVENT: ECMC 56th Anniversary Weekend & Anniversary Dinner [under development]

Sat/Sun October: RIDE: We'll ride to the Rail Explorer's Catskills River Run. Experience the magic of the historic Ulster & Delaware Railroad as you travel alongside the Esopus Creek through the beautiful woods of the Catskill Mountains. Bring a snack and a drink to enjoy at the creek-side turnaround. 8-mile round trip with electric pedal assistance. <https://www.railexplorers.net/tours/catskills-ny> [this ride is under development]

October/November: RIDE: End of season leaf-peeping ride. [under development]

REMEMBER: There are plenty of other events and rides added to our official calendar on a regular basis, especially day rides! Be sure to bookmark <http://calendar.EmpireCityMC.com> and come along with us on some great rides! Our physical mailing address is: **Empire City MC, 10 W 15th St, Suite 609, New York, NY 10011-6821.**

For membership information, visit <http://empirecitymc.com/membership.php> to view/download our constitution, bylaws and membership application. We're also on facebook at <http://facebook.EmpireCityMC.com> where you can chat with us.

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