

CHANGE, CHANGE, CHANGE --- IS SOMETIMES GOOD...



NORTH FLORIDA TOUR -- NOVEMBER 3-6, 2011
'JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON'

CHANGE IN THE SCENERY, NEW ROADS TO EXPLORE, NEW SPRINGS TO VIEW,
NEW FRIENDS TO MAKE – BUT REMEMBER, ***DON'T FEED THE GATORS!***

This article is written to 'entice' you with the NEW activities at this upcoming North Florida Tour. It seems to be 'way too early' to think about fall rides, but if you want to make noteworthy changes then you do what you have to do to make things happen! AND SO, WE DID! Jim Hoey and I traveled to our lodging spot, Camp Cherry Lake, Madison, Florida, to find some new sites; historical places; additional natural springs that possibly you have never seen before; new routes that are just the right mileage (100 Mile Century Ride on Saturday); live oak trees that are dripping with moss; low traffic country back roads; farms and horse farms; old Florida towns and villages (Sleepy Hollow type) that are *'just down the road a piece'* (testified by the locals); and views that would knock your socks off. We drove, sometimes fast, and 974 miles later, we have much to share with all of you!

“What’s new?” Honey Lake Plantation in Greenville is our Saturday (11/5/11) destination on our bicycle route, both the 100 miles century route and the shorter option of 60ish miles. **A man could get lost out there! Yes, BUT the food and the views will reel you in to enjoy a couple of hours on the grounds at Honey Lake.** I’m sure if you become ‘full & lazy’, we’ll get you back to camp.

On the HLP site, you will be provided a casual lunch: just look for the outside cookhouse and smell the aroma (and that’s not the horse poop!). Before you depart, take the ‘50 cent’ tour of the grounds, a spectacular place and scenery, luscious rental cabins, the lakes, the chapel, swimming pool, etc. Go to the website (www.honeylakeplantation.com) for a closer look.

Honey Lake Plantation is a 4,700 acre recreational and working plantation featuring an 80 acre spring-fed lake on the Aucilla River. This is without a doubt one of the most pristine and beautiful places in North Florida. Unlike most lakes in this area, Honey Lake is a clear deep water lake directly connected to the Floridian Aquifer. It offers wonderful fishing and is loaded with largemouth bass and various species of bluegill, and other game fish. The lake is one of the most outstanding gems in this region.



**NOW YOU KNOW “WHY THE
CHICKEN CROSSED THE
ROAD!”**

*The chicken crossed the road
because it was time for change...
The chicken wanted change
Or was it **THE VIEW!!***

Friday, 11/4, is the new route to Peacock Springs & Mayo (map provided). Historically, Friday's ride is a remote start, and we'll drive south of Madison to Dowling Park to begin our bike ride. We'll cycle to Peacock Springs, the town of Mayo, via the old trestle bridge. Years ago, we dashed through Mayo driving to the fire tower to our destination, Roy's Restaurant in Steinhatchee. Mayo, Florida, will bring back many memories to the past North Florida attendees, even though most people never rode 'in the town' itself, except for Larry Kloet and Sean Glackmeyer.

Mayo has a population of 1,028, but doesn't have much to offer the financially minded, dressing for success folks, the 'dating' public, or night life wayfarers. But narcotics and marijuana are everywhere! Proliferous business groups are at low ebbs in Lafayette County, but growing marijuana might be a possible marketing path – **YOU THINK?** Although, the guy, 'crook', got found out ... 'caught as it were', because it is **ILLEGAL** to grow marijuana, except maybe in the State of California! Maybe he thought a farm is a farm, and product is a product...

Mayo has a couple of restaurants, and Friday's lunch is on 'your own' – so you may want to stop at the Mayo Café or the Two Sisters Restaurant to get a bite to eat before returning to Dowling Park. FYI, Dowling Park has a Village Restaurant, but closes at 2:00pm.

We have gotten the OK to park our cars at the Dowling Park Baptist Church just outside of the Advent Village. On your return, take a tour of the village: you may want to live there like Earl & Diane Johnson, past members of the SBL.

If we are in luck, maybe some Dowling Park citizen group will remember the “Cookie Rides” from years past and will bake us a platter of cookies or brownies and have them piping hot on our return?!

Friday night dinner will be at Camp Cherry Lake, which is an add-on meal -- no need to run out for dinner in Madison on Friday night. Lucky for us, Ms. Elista Prichett, Mayor of Greenville will give us a talk about Ray Charles and his early years in Greenville.



She is quite a local celebrity in this part of the country, a thoughtful, powerful retired school teacher, and childhood friend of Ray Charles.

While on the routes or with the optional kayaking/canoeing, you are truly in the Florida back country. As you pedal or paddle around the bend,

you might envision how it might have been 200 years prior – a tribe of Seminole Indian hunters hiding in the forest, waiting the time to draw closer with bow ‘n arrows in hand, and sitting high bare back on their magnificent ponies. In 2011, we can thank goodness they are not after us! Between the time of Ponce de Leon and the 21st Century, things have changed. In the mid-1900s, the Seminoles were trying to decide: the tradition of the Garnet & Gold, which helmet to use, and to keep the spirits happy for Chief Osceola and his chief horse, Renegade! Thank God for a game called **FOOTBALL!**

Now, when you are way out there on Mayo’s trestle bridge or on the dirt road leading to the abandoned bridge on Hwy 84, you might stop to listen for the sound of the ‘spirit’ ghost wailing or a baby crying. Let me tell you, it’s not the wind! You hear yourself saying, **“I don’t believe in ghosts - Nope, Negatory, Nadda.”** The mystery of whether ghosts & spirits are they real (?) have been a big uncertainty for a very long time.

The question will remain up to each individual to answer, based on his or her own beliefs and paranormal experiences. Believers have proof, through theories, visions, and hauntings while non-believers, skeptics, have their logical explanations. The benefit in mythology of bridges and deserted bridges are a perfect setting for creepy stories and keeping their legends alive.

North Florida has quite a few of these blighted bridges left (i.e. the deserted bridge overlooking the Suwannee River near the Suwannee River Music Park on Hwy 129 and one ‘just up the road a piece’ near C.C.Lake, north on Hwy 84 toward Quitman).



The local residents are no exception in attempting to keep these urban stories about poltergeist going. The ‘Cry Baby’ Spook lingers ‘under that thr’ bridge’ and later you’ll see the tiny footprints on the top of your car when you return back to your destination. For the sharp-eyed person just seeing something for the first time, he or she may explain the event later as fun and possibly just an ‘extraordinary’ occurrence.

BUT the real episode of how this occasion went down was *mmm* -- should I tell? We were cycling across the bridge and decided to stop for the view. Earlier, we had heard the story of the teenager that threw her baby off of the bridge, and the bridge became haunted! Although as we were looking down at the water, we began to hear strange voices of ‘release’ me, loud screams, and a vale of wavering bright light, hazy, flowing spirits moving closer to us. We asked ourselves, “What was that?” Suddenly, something touched us. That was when we looked at each other with big rounded catlike eyes: **“WELL TONTO -- Time to go, and let’s pedal fast!”**

Was that just a bit of imagination, even though our hair stood on end, our bodies shivering with goose pimples, fear and cold ran through our veins, or was the portrayal just a good climax to the story?

If you have never attended the North Florida Tour, this year may be just your time. For a 3-day Florida getaway weekend, just can't beat it! You can bike, kayak with Jim Hoey (email him at jim@jimandjeanne.com), swim, hike, eat, and all of the rest for a small fee.

Don't forget the shrimp will be waiting for YOU!

Five meals are included in your fee (Friday night dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch, & dinner, Sunday breakfast). Application can be found in August-October's issues of Freewheelin' Magazine and on Active.com. For other Q&As, email (marg@margaretbokros.com) or Epic Bikes, McDonough, GA, or Facebook, Margaret Bokros.