

Ride Report: Bill's Old Bike Barn, May 17 & 18, 2025

XS750.....Fred S

T500.....Joel S

T120R.....Grant C

Benelli 650....as backup

For this small group of three, four bikes were prepped; three were chosen, the Benelli stayed in the garage as an un-needed backup. Grant came up from Virginia the day before and stayed over, B&B style. The weather was threatening, it has rained for 5 days, including Friday night and into Saturday morning. We sat down for breakfast at 8:30 and just before our 9:30 departure, the rain stopped and the sun came out. Glory be!

We headed due north for 35 miles and stopped for more coffee and to visit the "Smallest Church in the World". It was built 100 years ago and is still used for the occasional wedding ceremony. Only the priest and the newlyweds fit inside, guests stand outside the door looking in. Gail, a descendant of the builder, still lives on site and came down to tell us the back story. We carried on another 75 miles to lunch in Snyders, then proceeded to enter the infamous Andreas Labyrinth: a collection of tiny back roads that often don't allow for smooth navigation, as was the case this time. As a result of our meandering, we missed the last coal mine tour in Lansford which happened at 3. No worries, at least the bathroom was open, and we took a short break.

From the mine we continued north and west. This is, or once was, coal country and the shut down mines have put a lot of folks out of work. The country roads were scenic as well as entertaining, connecting small towns where the dying economy was quite apparent. Route 309 is one of my favorite roads as it winds along a fertile valley between two high ridges for about 35 miles; curves, creeks, and windmills. After Brandonville, Zion Grove, Shumans, and Mainville, we pass through Mifflinville, then parallel the Susquehanna River through Nescopeck, Wopwallopen, and Shickshinny before entering State Gamelands and finally finding our B&B for the night.

The location is drop dead gorgeous, with amazing views. The accommodations are pristine clean, and we choose where we will sleep and settle in for the night. There is no food here, and none nearby. We decide against riding out to find food--that night I dream of food. In the morning, we have a cuppa, then head back south to Bloomsburg, where we find a decent breakfast restaurant. We go large to make up for the lack of dinner before riding a short ways to Bills Old Bike Barn. We arrive hours before official opening, but Bill and Judy have left the door open for us, so we have the place to ourselves for an hour or so. The variety and quantity of displays defies description; I will let the photos provide a small sample of what we see.

From Bill's we enjoy the ride south to Kennett Square. It includes a brief stop in Shamokin before we attack Route 125, AKA Switzerland in PA. A road so popular with local bikers that there are sometimes photographers shooting videos along the way which are offered up for sale to the riders. The route takes us through Amish country next, where horse drawn buggies are parked en masse at whatever house is hosting Sunday services this week. The weather is warm and a stop for ice cream is a must. Finally, we top up with gas and arrive back home for a home cooked meal, courtesy of my wife Lynn. *Lynn can cook!*

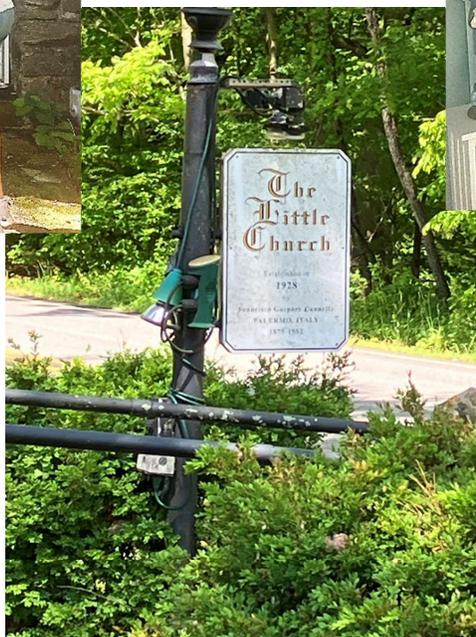


After 5 days of rain, the sun pops out for us! Here we are at a coffee stop by the 'Smallest Church in the World', hidden behind the pine trees.



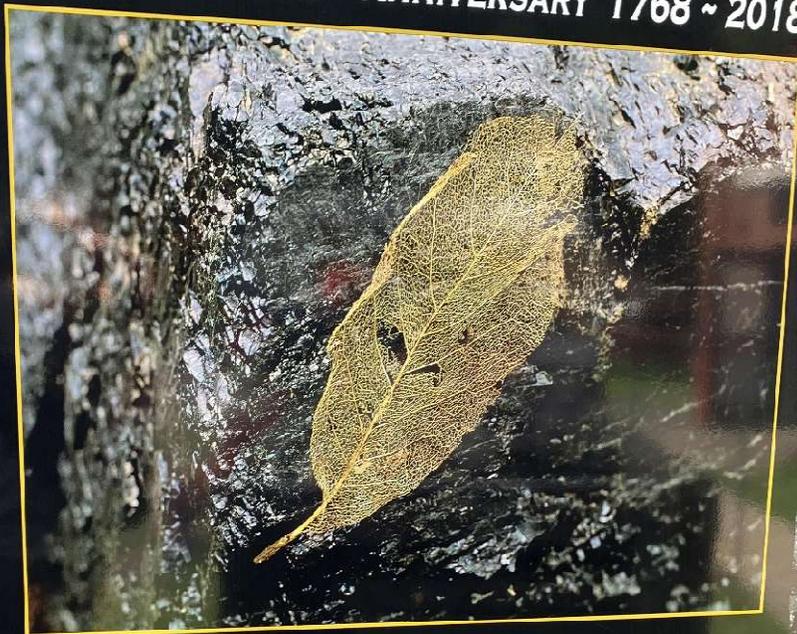
LEFT: Gail explains the history of the church to Grant.

RIGHT: The inside includes an altar, a cross, some holy water, and room for 3 adults.



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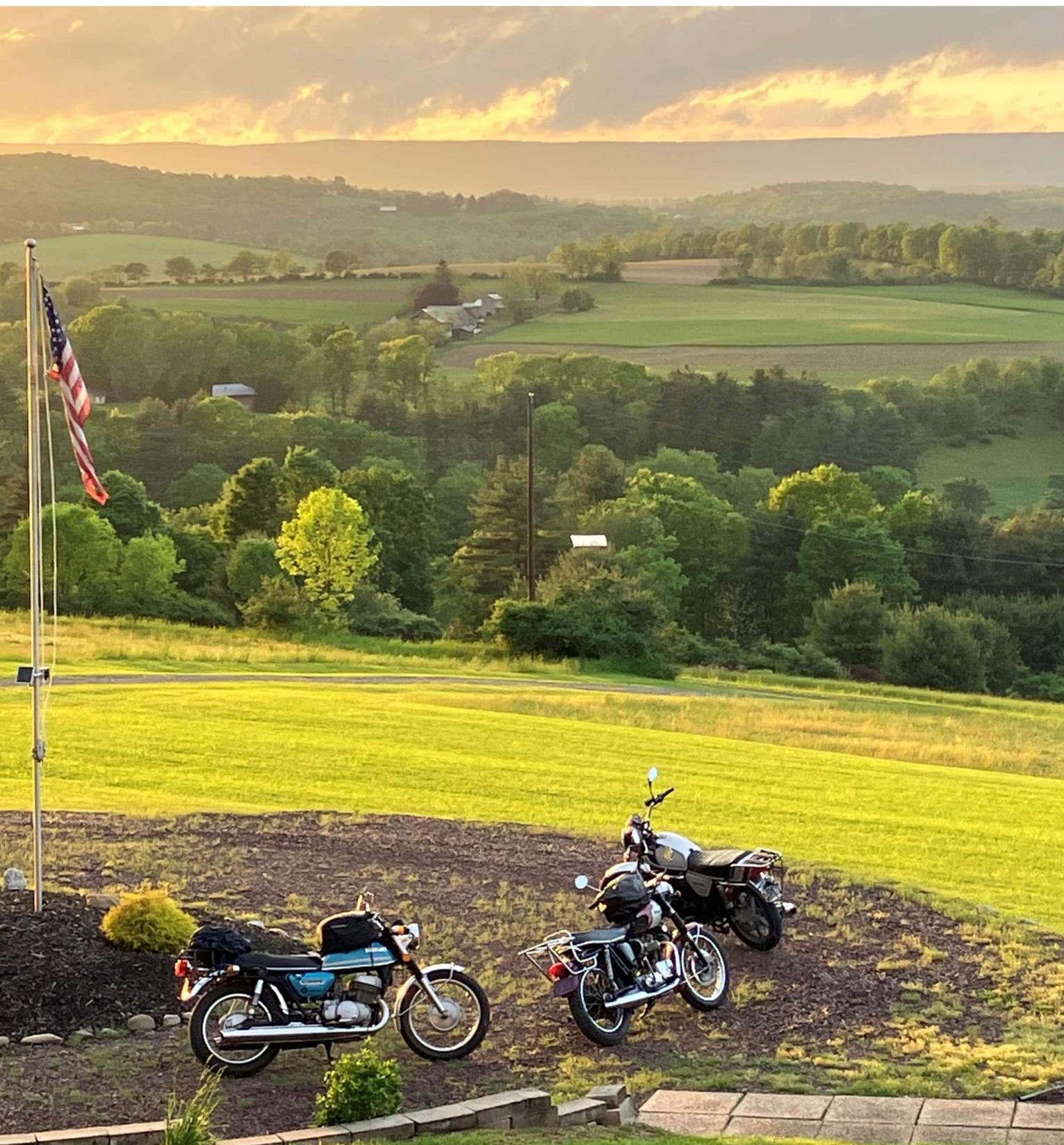
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Coal mine #9 is actually the oldest coal mine in the US. To ride the electric tram a mile down into the earth where it's always 50°. To see the conditions under which men and children and mules spent their days, toiling in very dangerous conditions to extract the energy needed to fuel our nation's industrial revolution is to appreciate their sacrifice. It has been said that there is enough anthracite in PA to run our country for 100 years. If only we could extract it safely and make it burn cleanly.





Our B&B: Small room/ big view



More than just bikes, Bill apparently will collect just about anything.



Fred ties out the seating position on the Kettenrad: half tank/half motorcycle. One has to ask: "WHY?"



LEFT: Would you call this a moto-pony? Is that a Harley engine in there? It must not quite be functional, judging from the header that does not seem to attach to the engine. Also, if it did run, how would one steer? People do build the strangest things!

RIGHT: But what could be stranger than a guitar that plays itself (if you insert a quarter)? In the upper photo Grant's reflection contemplates the device. The bottom picture shows the fret depressors, and yes, this one is functional and plays several complex tunes quite well, thank you very much.

