



GTR – LaGrange
May 18-20
By Susanna Sisk



Fri., May 18 – Remember how you used to spend the day on your bicycle as a kid? Today's ride gives you that option if you decide to bike through Callaway gardens. Option miles: 32 miles (1325 ft. climbing), 46 miles (2000 ft. climbing) or 59 miles (3000 ft. of climbing). The short option took you through valleys while the two longer options climb up Pine Mountain once or lucky if you do the long 59 mile twice over Pine Mountain.

Team TASK would arrive in time for the 9:00 am remote start to do the longer option of the day. John and I both looked at the elevation climb stats and thought wow....can we make it. The rolling terrain was perfect with a few longer rollers with a little more extra leg push would crest us to the top. We had some 5 other great teams to ride with that were clustered together to do the longer option. At around mile 18 our first climb began. Not too bad.



We would all stop at mile marker 28 for a quick store stop. I guess once we left we had a very long climb and felt like the brakes were rubbing it was tough. A lot of head wind pushed down our speed. We entered into the park with some cool winding downhill speeds.

A group photo opportunity presented itself I believe on top of Pine Mountain or felt like the top. I was happy we were able to keep together with at least one other team. The “young-eons” Melissa and Billy were able to keep ahead with one other tough team. At around mile 46 was our second pass through Pine Mountain.



A great sweeping down hill and speed that I didn't want to see on my computer we would take a hard right back towards Butts Mill Road where Saturday dinner would be held. Traffic wasn't bad considering we were in a resort type area. Another pass through town for those that wanted to stop at Purple Cow.

At the riders meeting Roger informed us there would be a “grunt” hill to contend with the last .2 miles to finish. Because it was short and right turn and another immediate left turn there was no speed to get up the hill so “grunt” it was. Okay, we cheated, saw it coming and got in granny. Old folks that we are had to save our legs for the long ride on Saturday.

All in all the day was perfect. We met some new friends and would only hope to ride with them again throughout the weekend. (Robert/Betty-Jean Jordan, Melissa/Billy, Charlie/Pat Jenkins, John/Allison Short, Dennis/Stephanie Sutton).

We had a very late lunch at The Bail Leaf and was only going to order a light salad but because of the time we decided to eat pasta to get refuel for the long Saturday ride. We had a nice group of around 10 people eating and playing catch up with our life.

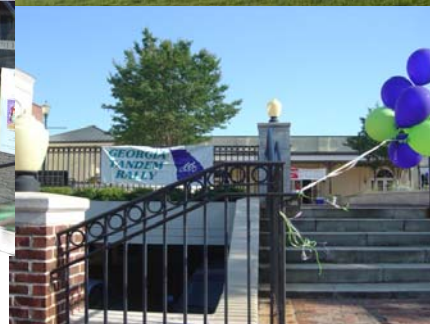
Relaxing time sitting around the pool and socializing before dinner. I don't know about John but I was hungry again around 6:00 pm. We would head to the square and stick our head in at Venucci Italian Restaurant where

Bicycle “Ralph” Schmidt and Cathy invited us to sit with them since the tables were full and it would be some time before we could be fit into dinner availability. We had a great time visiting with the Schmit’s.

A walk through the square we would head across the street for the GTR Scoops on the Square Ice Cream Social. A chance to play GTR LaGrange Trivia and prizes. I think we had more flavours of ice cream with many toppings to pick from. With the sun going down it was a little chilly with overnight highs in the low 40s. Yes for

May...we were promised some cool weather for our rides during GTR 2007. We had a great time!

Finished miles: 62
Avg. 19.2



Sat. May 19 – Our route today would be the southern half of West Point Lake, which is the one of the largest man-made lakes in the country. A promised outdoor lunch at the pavilion Rocky Point Recreational Area, West Point Lake with swimming as an option on the beach.



Option miles: 16 remote miles (1100 ft. climbing), 23 miles (1650 ft. climbing), 44 miles (2600 ft. of climbing or 51 miles (3000 ft of climbing). The Big Dam ride return p.m. option of 27+ miles for short/medium/long riders.

John and I debated about the miles for today. Another 3000 feet of climbing thinking about Pine Mountain climb and our tired legs. We decided we drove 5+

hours to get to LaGrange, then let’s see LaGrange and the surrounding views.



Great routes! We fortunate again to ride with some good teams, pushing the pace and helping those of us with tired legs. The main group got split up on one of the longer rollers and we would find us out again with some fast teams. Our store stop at 29 miles out caught us unprepared with a very long FAST road with Bob/Sue taking the STATE SIGN! Of course, they were in the back sucking wheel the whole time to have leg to go around the rest of us on a small upgrade. We all pulled in for a short break. James and Brenda and their little band of merry tandemers would head out a few car lengths ahead of us when we all decided to leave. Just enough that the distance made it hard to let them go. So off we all go to catch them and run them down.

We had some good pulls and sprints past a few other tandem friends to bust up a few rollers and have enough speed on the down hills to finally catch the three teams. Great roads. We were so glad to decided to do the longer morning route. I was starting to wonder when the 3000 feet of climbing was going to take place! We would find out the 3000 feet was gradually put into the route so you really did not notice the incline as we did in the short span of climbing the day before doing Pine Mountain. HOW DECEIVING! Roger – you had us all syked up there would be some ungodly climb for the day.

Soon we found ourselves at the lunch stop. Once again a fabulous venue and great food to eat. Our average with the 50 miles to lunch was 21.5. Not bad for 3000 feet of climbing. John had to give me a big pat on the back as we did good and we still left somewhat fresh in the leg area.

The return miles for afternoon would be 27+ for our return. A cool down ride with just Bob and Sue. We enjoyed Big Dam and the gorgeous scenery. I would head to LaGrange again in a heartbeat. Thank you Roger and Eve – you did great!

Snack hour at Hampton Inn and a relaxing afternoon brought our evening to a close at Butts Mill Farm with dinner in the Carriage House. Bring your own drinks and a delicious meal put the close of the day to an end.

Finished miles: 81
Avg. AM: 21.5
Avg. PM: 18



Sun. May 20 – We would head north of LaGrange into the horse country of Troup County. Longer option riders would visit Hogansville, a quant railroad town founded around 1900. Option miles: 26 miles (900 ft. climbing), or 43 miles (1550 ft. climbing).

I think our first time ever but we would decide to do the short route today. John didn't want to get sagged in. I was game to do whatever my man wanted to do. Plus we had a long drive home. I was happy to sit back and converse with other tandem couples.

We peeled off from the longer route riders (good thing – heard they picked up the pace MORE) and would tool in with noodle riding. It was nice...no speed, just the scenery. Introduced ourselves to Jim/Sue Pickrell from ME

(1st timers to GTR). I believe there were 18 new tandem teams at their 1st GTR...congratulations. Hope you enjoyed the weekend.

Finished miles: 26

Avg. 18.2

Highlights of the weekend:

Great friends to ride with

Great food

Great routes

Great WEATHER

Great scenery

Great Host and Hostess

Rating: on a scale of 1 to 10, ten being the highest John gave a 15 for cool weather and hardly any wind. I gave this rally a 12 because I couldn't give another 15! Super good rally ... a must to have been a registered team!

For more pictures go to: <http://www.imagestation.com/album/pictures.html?id=2091897216>

Reminder: GTR will be in its 10th year 2008. You don't want to miss the excitement that I am sure Roger and Eve will have in store for us. Registration will most likely fill up FAST.



*By Susanna Sisk
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