

ADVERTISEMENT

VOICE OF THE REGION Do you support putting the new proposed limits on PA's Right to Know law?

[Vote](#)

Pittsburgh Rides -- Destination: Harpers Ferry

ADVERTISEMENT

November 18, 2010 12:00 am



Click image to enlarge

Share with others:

[0](#) **Tweet** [6](#)
[Like](#) [Send](#) [in](#)
[Print](#) [Email](#) [Read Later](#)

feedback

Pittsburgh lawyer Garry Nelson rode to Harpers Ferry, W.Va., for a Halloween trip.

By Garry Nelson

The bike is all checked out -- transmission, engine oil, lights and tire pressure, all of the minutiae of a pre-trip check that I learned when I pushed 18-wheelers up and down the East Coast in my 20s. My right thumb presses the starter button while adjusting the throttle with the same hand. The motor whirrs and rumbles to life, at first stuttering and unsure, then settles into even combustion as all of the spark plugs are igniting the fuel and all is ready for a Saturday-Sunday round trip we have referred to as our "Harpers Ferry." An anticipated get-away, the perfect distance for a late fall early sunset trip.

After biscuits and gravy at the Indian Head Snack Bar we were to visit Negro Mountain ridge's Mount Davis (highest point in Pennsylvania), with its viewing tower being part of the attraction.

My WPA Writers Project Maryland book proclaims that Negro Mountain is the highest point on all of Route 40. Further, the WPA writer reports that during a French and Indian War battle between Colonel Thomas Cresap's group

Ride and Write

Welcome to Pittsburgh Rides, our regular feature on motorcycling. Here we bring you the latest in rides, trends and events, but we need your input. We're looking for voices from the local biking community willing to share (in roughly 500 words) your experiences on the road and what you think is hot on wheels. Send your story or pitch to [Weekend editor Scott Mervis at smervis@post-gazette.com](mailto:smervis@post-gazette.com).

Latest Mortgage Rates

	Current	Last Week
30 Year Fixed	3.38%	3.33%
15 Year Fixed	2.56%	2.54%
5/1 ARM	2.31%	2.26%

[Mortgage Calculator](#)
[Affordability Calculator](#)
[Refinance Loans](#)
[FHA Loans](#)
[Loan Modifications](#)
[Home Equity Loans](#)

[Zillow Mortgage Marketplace](#)
[See local rates](#)

LATEST IN LIFE

[Anthony Bourdain visits Pittsburgh](#)
about an hour ago

[Stylebook: Diggin' it with Vera Bradley; Pittsburgh Fashion Hall of Fame names honorees](#)
about 5 hours ago

[PNC Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Spring Hat Luncheon celebrates 15th anniversary](#)
about 15 hours ago

[FAME's 15th annual luncheon at the Duquesne Club](#)
about 15 hours ago

[Go Red for Women Luncheon and Conference at the Wyndham Grand](#)
about 15 hours ago

[The Carnegie Science Awards at Carnegie Music Hall](#)
about 15 hours ago

and an Indian war party on this mountain, "one of Cresap's men, a giant Negro, was killed and buried here, hence the name."

Colonel Cresap was known to Pennsylvanians as "the Monster of Maryland" for his personal involvement in the boundary disputes between Maryland and Pennsylvania. The colonel settled the Oldtown area that is on Route 51, southeast of Cumberland, Md. The hometown of "the Monster of Maryland" was the perfect stop on this halloween eve journey through history.

We crossed the Potomac at Oldtown on the only privately owned toll bridge in the United States, known as The Low Water Toll Bridge, as it is useless when the water has risen over its surface. It is a rather crude bridge, built on old concrete pilings covered with a noisy wooden surface. We can't complain about the fare: 50 cents for our two bikes.

Two-lane blacktops took us over many mountains with switchbacks and curves that make traveling on two wheels so enjoyable. You emerge from the mountains into Charles Town (hanging place of John Brown), then on to Harpers Ferry, a perfectly preserved revolutionary town with much history. Abolitionist Brown's raid in 1859 on the Armory is the city's best known event.

Our return trip was via Shepherdstown, across the Potomac from the Battle of Antietam, to Berkley Springs, which has the smallest national park. The springs have been used for many years -- it is advertised that George Washington soaked here. Then it was on to Pawpaw, W.Va., the location of the Pawpaw Canal Tunnel. All of these towns are worth a visit, and one could spend three nights and four days in the area.

This great trick-or-treat trip leaves me with one great regret, discovered while retracing my latest route on maps upon my return. I discovered I had missed a perfect stop for this Halloween tour -- "Pumpkin Center," Maryland. It's halfway between Flintstone and Oldtown Maryland, just 20 additional miles and a perfect addition to Oldtown's monster heritage.

The Shenandoah Valley is filled with much history. The towns are supported by a cottage industry that serves tourists; from bed and breakfast inns and hotels, all within walking distance of taverns so one does not have to ride home after a night out. That makes Harpers Ferry and the surrounding towns a great destination for a 220-mile ride.

Garry Nelson is an attorney in Pittsburgh.
First Published November 18, 2010 12:00 am

More From Post-Gazette.com

[Namesake of Cowboys legend happy to be a Steeler](#)

[Collier: Big Ben, Steelers need another weapon](#)

[Charles Krauthammer / So much for President Obama's second term](#)

[Tomlin disagrees with LB coach about Spence](#)

[School explosion: A zero-tolerance policy did the damage](#)

More from the web

[11 Foods You Can't Buy Anywhere Anymore \(The Fiscal Times\)](#)

[The Best and Worst Food and Drinks at Trader Joe's \(The Daily Meal\)](#)

[14 Easy-to-Grow Plants to Put in the Ground This Spring \(DIY Network\)](#)

[Buffalo Sabres commit to Ron Rolston as head coach | Home Ice - SI.com \(Sports Illustrated\)](#)

[Miami Dolphins Unveil New Uniforms \(STACK\)](#)

Three Quick Questions

Do you support a developer's decision to turn Pittsburgh Schenley High School into a luxury apartment complex?

- YES, I think it's the best plan
- NO, it should be used for student housing
- NO, it should be transformed in a charter school
- NO, it should be turned into an arts school

Post-Gazette Question

Powered by CivicScience



Family Genealogy Workshop
Wednesday, May 15 • 7-9 p.m.
History writer **Marylyne Pitz**

One of a series of PGU continuing education workshops

ADVERTISEMENT

