

## **Ride to Woodville TX**

### **March 2004**

The bluebonnets along 288 were a harbinger of the upcoming ride to Woodville, but the strong winds knocking us and the orange traffic barrels around on the Fred Hartman Bridge quickly blotted out any thoughts of wildflowers for the time-being. But once off the bridge and scooting along 330 to I-10, visions of blooming dogwood were once again dancing in our heads.

I counted 23 bikes, but there may have been more, parked in the Cracker Barrel parking lot at 8:57 AM on that blustery March 27 morning. Ralph gave his “saddle up” command and we lined up along the driveway to exit north on Garth Road, headed for some of the best family-style cooking around.

Riding along the flat open landscape headed toward Liberty, we saw roadside shoulders covered with tiny blue wildflowers, with the occasional patch of Indian paintbrush. Clusters of yellow coreopsis mixed in with the paintbrush gave the road banks a southwestern color scheme. As we got further north, the route took us past walls of wisteria – escapees gone wild in the woods - and yards filled with mountainous azalea bushes. Then, as the woods grew denser, we began to see dogwood in bloom, their flowers seeming to float horizontally along the tree’s delicate branches.

As the group entered Woodville and turned left onto 190, we could see tents and vendors set up along the roadside, preparing for a festival or parade. Further along 190, horse trailers lined the roadside. Just beyond, going up the rise, I caught sight of the bikes staggered two by two ahead of me. This view never ceases to thrill me, and chrome glinted in the passing sun as each bike, one by one, turned right, onto the downhill drive toward the Pickett House Restaurant.

The food, served family-style, this day consisted of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, lima beans, greens, dumplings, and biscuits. And it was finger-lickin’ good! A few of us waddled outside to get some air and discovered a good-sized Honda group had joined us at the restaurant, parking their bikes a discrete distance away. Had all of these riders driven their cages, instead, there would not have been room in the parking lot. There really is something to be said for that!

Remember those horse trailers we saw on the way toward the restaurant? On our way back toward Woodville to find a gas station, we discovered that all of those trailers had disgorged their contents onto the side of the road, and a dozen or more horses and their riders pranced about on the shoulder, waiting for their “saddle up” command. Apparently they were forming up for a parade through town, which explained the tents and vendors we saw. There was a kindred ‘way cool’ feeling to be riding our steel ponies past the flesh-and-blood kind and to mutually wave to one another in passing.

Way cool, Ralph and fellow HouTex members. Thanks for yet another great ride.