

Road-Trip 2005 – The Lonely Roads Tour

8/18 through 9/17/2005

6,300 miles

8/18/2005 - I got a pretty early start and after the formal “goodbyes,” I headed east and soon I was enjoying the beauty of the Feather River Canyon. I also saw a reminder of the devastation caused by the “Storie” Fire. A forest fire in which I was the Initial Attack officer overhead, when the fire was still only a couple of acres. With a “perfect storm” of dry fuel, southern exposed slope and a miserable place for a fire-fighting aircraft to drop retardant, whoosh! Up the slope it went consuming brush and timber eventually to the tune of 60,000 acres. This was the largest fire to escape initial actions that I ever flew on. Well anyway, other than the burnt trees, the scenic quality of the canyon is always wonderful, especially on a motorcycle. My ride for this trip is a 1990 Harley Softail, towing a motorcycle trailer I assembled myself using a Harbor Freight utility trailer, with a Sears car-top carrier mounted to it. On my previous long road-trip, I had no trailer and just lashed everything I needed for camping onto the bike. I must admit, I sort of looked like a Jewish rag vender when I rolled into town.

Soon, I was on Hwy 395 heading for the Mammoth Lakes, specifically, the “free” Glass Creek Campground where I would meet some family members for a couple days of camping. Making my way through the traffic of Sparks, Reno and Carson City, soon I was near Minden, NV and there was a lot of wind blowing. I stopped at a local park nestled out of the wind and had lunch. After lunch, it was not long before I was entering some real scenic areas and was soon following the Walker River which during a normal wet year, really rolls along.



Eventually, I came to the Mono Lake overlook where I stopped to enjoy the view. I struck up a conversation with a fellow from Rome, The Rome. He was interested in my travel arrangement and where I was heading and he wanted his wife to take his photo with me, so I had her take one for me as well. He gave me his business card in case some time, I traveled to Rome.

Before long, I arrived at glass creek and for the next couple of days, we did several things like take the gondola up to Mammoth Mountain and we took a hike around an old volcano crater near Mono Lake where there was some sort of flies continually attacking us. After a few nights camping, it was time to say goodbye and head east.



8/21/05 – 480 Miles

Without breakfast, I headed east toward the sun and I headed down Hwy 120 where there were some real interesting rock formations to enjoy. Soon, I was in the small town of Benton and I stopped at a little park where I fixed myself something to eat. Soon a car pulled into the park and it had a C.M.A. (Christian Motorcyclist Association) sign on the side. It turned out that it was one of the Region Representatives and his wife, who were returning home after touring several CMA chapters. It was so fun, yet strange to run into them out here in the “middle of nowhere.” Soon, I continued east across some serious desert which is one of the landscapes I really enjoy. Yes, it is dry and stark at times, but, the vistas are great. I rode through old mining towns like Tonopah, Ely, and Milford. The day was long but enjoyable and I stayed that night at the KOA in Beaver Utah.



8/22/2005 – 539 Miles

The weather was perfect for riding today and I had a variety of landscapes from forested hills to bleak deserts and stunning red sandstone rock formations in the Capitol Reef National Park. I also had some nice views of Lake Powell along the way and some really poor looking homes in one of the Native American Reservations I rode through.



Except for several miles on freshly oiled and graveled road in the Capitol Reef Park, the bulk of the day was uneventful. Some of the towns I rode through were Angle, Bicknell, Cainville, Montcello, Durango, Pagosa Springs. I camped out in Chama, NM and I was tired; it had been a long day.



8/23/2005 - Chama, NM, is on the Colorado border, it is not a notably prosperous town, but, it has one thing: the “best” steam train ride (in my humble opinion) in the United States. The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is a 3 ft narrow gauge heritage railroad running between Chama, New Mexico and Antonito, Colorado. It runs over the 10,015 ft. Cumbres Pass and through Toltec Gorge, from which it takes its name. Most of the steam excursion rides I have ridden have all had one thing in common, the engines didn’t have to work very

hard because the routes were fairly level. This is not the case with the C.T.S.R. That little engine has to work very hard, and is fed a lot of coal to get over the high pass. Although I have ridden this train a few times, the ride is always great, I highly recommend it. On this trip though, I didn’t take the time to ride it again.



The ride from Chama goes through some real scenic forested areas but once one get to Antonito CO, you are back in the desert again and all the way to Pueblo and eastward, the terrain is really flat and featureless. My camp for the night is at the John Martin Reservoir in SE Colorado. The campground was really large and accommodating only a few campers for the night. There is a large lake here which is of course the main attraction. One thing that pretty much steamed me, is the nearly \$30 camping fee for my little outfit, and of course, the quarters to pay for the shower. Oh well,

such is life and it was good to have a good quiet place to sleep for the night since the place was empty.

8/24/2005 – I woke around 7:00am and did the normal stuff to start my day and was soon motoring east through the flat expanse of Kansas. Along the way, I saw an interesting site, out in the watermelon field was an old school bus that had been modified, all the side windows had been removed and now the bus was serving as the melon harvest truck, something you don’t see every day.





The scenery today is areas of grasslands interspersed with field crops, now and then I see fenceposts that are made of granite. It looks like stone was a good option since there are few trees around. East of Garden City (which is really no garden spot), I stopped at a rest area and ate some lunch. Nearby was a historical plaque that said: Beersheba. Since I have an interest in things Jewish, I took a look and. It seems that in 1882, about 60 Jewish immigrants from Russia settled there. The colony stretched over several sections of land, each family homesteading 160 acres. Dugouts and sod houses were constructed for homes, a synagogue and school. But, farming proved to be



unprofitable and the severe winters produced hardships and 10 years after the colony's birth, it was all over.

None of the colonists remained and the land reverted to prairie. My campsite for the night was at the Wilson State Park near Wilson, KS. The campground was on a large lake and at day's end; I was rewarded with a beautiful sunset.

8/25/2005 – I was hoping to make it all the way to Fort Leavenworth today, where I would visit my Son, Kevin. Kevin is in the Army and assigned as a prison guard at the Federal prison. Anyone who has traveled through Kansas knows that it is mostly flat and sometimes, very windy. The ride lacks any scenic surprises, although, you can see a slow progression between the real desert- like land, probably better termed as, "prairie," and what are eventually, very productive farms. They grow an assortment of things here, soybeans, vetch, and of course row after row, mile after mile of corn. The weather is clear but I noticed that there were building clouds up ahead and by the time I got to Abilene Kansas, there was a full blown thunderstorm that had to be 100 miles long slowly moving north, threatening to cut off my route which was unfortunately, the interstate. I stopped for fuel and took a good look at the storm; it appeared to me that if I choose to wait out the storm, I would be idled for several hours, so, I donned my rain suit and set out. Within 10 minutes or so, I was beginning to be buffeted by the strong south wind and dust, I slowed down. Then, the rain commenced, and the drops were not only huge, they were coming in sideways, it was quickly becoming a deluge. It was raining so hard that the tracks of the car just ahead of me, completely disappeared by the time I got to them. I slowed down some more until I was going about 30 mph, more worried about the vigorous lightning, more than anything. About the time I thought that my decision was not a good one, the rain started slacking off a bit and a few minutes later, I was just back in the wind and dust and a few minutes later, I was clear.

I had beaten the storm! The rest of the ride to Fort Leavenworth was pretty uneventful and just prior to arriving, I was enjoying some of the farm scenery of the area.

My son had assured me that there was a nice camp ground near town and since the hour was getting late and the light ebbing, I went there directly. Hmmm, it was not the Shangri-La that I had imagined from his description, true, it was an actual city park, but it was more like a transient camp in decline with several scattered trailers and tents in various states of dilapidation. Another feature was that nearby, was a two track, train track, built to keep the coal trains running to the local power generation station which guaranteed a train every 20 minutes. Not only that, the trains came with an engine in the front and back, so you got the full racket twice each run. I considered a spot that didn't look too bad, and consulted with a couple of men who were working on an electrical project at the Fort for a few weeks. "Right here is fine" one of them said, "don't go down there toward the back of the camp, that's where the homeless and trouble is." With that advice, I proceeded to set up my camp which is pretty easy to do. My tent is a Camel 60 Second tent which sets up in about a minute, easy-peesy. Since I had eaten in town, I merely needed to set up to sleep. Except for the occasional coal train which sounded sort of like a Boeing 747 at takeoff power, the evening was pleasant and before long with ear-plugs deployed, I was asleep.

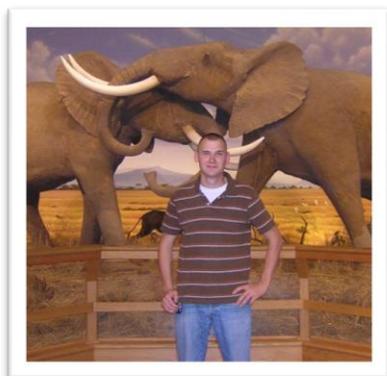
8/26/2005 – Morning came early

All was bliss until around 3:00 am when I heard someone loudly shouting my name; startling me from my slumber. It was my son, Kevin and he said, "DAD, THERE IS A GIGANTIC THUNDER STORM HEADING THIS WAY AND THEY ARE EXPECTING TORNADOS, **YOU** NEED TO GET TO SOMEWHERE SAFE. THE STORM IS SO BAD, I GOT SPECIAL PERMISSION TO LEAVE MY POST TO COME AND WARN YOU." And with that, he took off back to work and I started scrambling to load everything into the trailer while noting that the wind was really picking up and even a few large drops were arriving.

I scrambled like a "Chinese fire drill," and as I buttoned up the trailer and put on my rain suit, sure enough, the weather was getting serious with the flashes of lightning making their appearance. As I started the Harley, a coal train came by so I doubt if my neighbors even heard me leave. Then I thought, "now what do I do." My only option it seemed was that there was a large high bridge nearby that crossed the Missouri river and I positioned myself under it, at least in the driest place I could find. I remained there through the storm's wild moments and for a couple of hours while the rain came down. Shortly after 5:00am, I motored into town and found a restaurant that was open so I enjoyed a leisurely breakfast, while I dried out.

Later in the morning, I met with Kevin and we went for a tour of the Harley Davidson Factory in Kansas City which we enjoyed very much. On the way back from the factory tour, Kevin was riding with me on the Harley and there was a bit of excitement while we were on the freeway. All of the sudden, Kevin's foot peg had come loose and turned. The peg folded and Kevin's foot slipped and hit the roadway before he took the weight off his foot. The result was that the bike lurched to the left,

but between Kevin's quick reflexes and God's hand of protection, we managed not to lose control. Wow, how quickly things can change.



After that terrifying moment, we rode to the local Cabelas sporting goods store where they had an amazing assortment of stuffed animals displayed in equally amazing action scenes. Part of what I needed to accomplish today, was to find another place to camp and I found the, Weston Bend State Park about 8 miles away in Missouri. This camp was a great, safe and quiet place for the next couple of nights.

8/27/2005 - After enjoying a great nights rest at my new campground, I met with Kevin and he took me for a driving tour of some of the Fort's historical buildings and gave me a tour of his accommodations. We also went into Kansas City and toured the Steamboat Arabia. An excerpt from the Arabia's website describes this museum better than I can: "When the mighty Steamboat Arabia sank near Kansas City on September 5, 1856, she carried 200 tons of mystery cargo. Lost for 132 years, its recovery in 1988 was like finding the King Tut's Tomb of the Missouri River, remarkably preserved clothes, tools, guns, dishware and more. The discovery was truly a modern day treasure-hunting story at its best." The treasure was all kept together and wonderfully preserved and displayed, and I have visited 3 times without losing interest in this Kansas City, "must see.". This evening, the local CMA chapter, the Freedom Riders, were having a ride and I tagged along with them and found them to be real welcoming and had a great time with them. By the time I got back to camp, I was really tired from the long, fun filled day.



8/28/2005 - Today I said goodbye to Fort Leavenworth and headed south to Carthage, MO, where I briefly visited the Precious Moments headquarters. I looked around a bit and decided that the place was just a bit too fluffy for me, but, while still in town, I stopped to make some lunch for myself and while eating, shaded by the lid on my trailer, I saw something really startling. My rear motorcycle tire was so worn, that some cord was starting to be seen. This came as quite a shock because I had about 80% of the tread left on the tire when I left home. What I figured was the cause of this much greater than average wear, was that when pulling a trailer (and this was my first long trip with a trailer) the rider should accelerate slowly whether pulling away from a stop or moving up a steep hill. The extra drag of the trailer was causing the bike to slowly peel rubber off the rear and I didn't even know it.

So, with this new discovery, I (very carefully) headed, to Branson, MO where they had a repair shop where I could get a replacement. I arrived too late for service so I camped at Table Rock State Park for a couple of nights.

8/29/2005 – Today I went to the Motorcycle repair shop in Branson and they outfitted me with a new tire at a premium price for sure. Next, I did some local exploring of the area, and I watched a film about Hawaii at the Branson IMAX Theater and saw some of the local sights

8/30/2005 – Today I did some more looking around the area and I took a rather boring 2.5 hour ride on the Branson Scenic Railway which was fun, yet still boring. I had dinner out before heading back to camp.

8/31/2005 – I woke and got on the road in good time; heading to my friend, Mike Rowe's house in North Little Rock, AR. I met Mike in an unusual way, I was part of a online motorcycling trailer forum, and so was Mike. I had admired his neon themed icon he had made in Corel Draw, and we soon were corresponding and Mike helped me greatly in some neon themed items for a website I was building. My first stop would be Eureka Springs. Eureka Springs is a little town tucked away in the hills and one of the draws for the town is a train excursion ride which I had not planned to do. There is also a wonderful, I mostly glass, Thorncrown chapel. This beautiful chapel is the result of one man's thought that he and his wife should build a glass chapel in the woods to give wayfarers a place to relax in an inspiring way. Since it opened to the public in 1980, there have been more than 6 million visitors. It is indeed an inspiring chapel and seems to fit the wooded surroundings well. I was enjoying my ride in the wooded hills but, before long, was gradually giving way to a flatter landscape. I stopped for lunch in some shade offered alongside a country church building. My route took me through several small towns that Mike had warned me about being "speed traps." The worst one Mike said, was Greenbrier, so, in all the little towns, I was as respectful in regards to their speed laws, as well as moving through as quietly as my Harley could.



I found Mike's place without gaining a ticket and we had a good time catching up, face to face. I also met his intended, Sharron who I found to be delightful. After dinner out at a good Mexican restaurant, we went together to a CMA chapter officers meeting. One woman at the meeting had a really thick southern accent; I loved just hearing her talk. After that it was time to say goodnight.

9/1/2005 – I had a good night’s rest and after breakfast, Mike and I headed out toward Mena, AR. A number of allegations have been made about the use of Mena Intermountain Municipal Airport, as a CIA drop point in large scale cocaine trafficking, beginning in the latter part of the 1980s. But supposedly, no true crimes were ever identified. Along the way, we stopped at Pine Ridge, AR at the Lum and Abner Museum. From Wikipedia: *“Lum and Abner was an American network radio comedy program created by Chester Lauck and Norris Goff that was aired from 1931 to 1954. Modeled on life in the small town of Waters, Arkansas, near where Lauck and Goff grew up, the show proved immensely popular. In 1936, Waters changed its name to Pine Ridge after the show's fictional town.”* The museum was small but interesting although the popularity of the radio show was, a bit before my time. After that, we rode to Mena where we stopped to admire an original Studebaker dealer building and Esso gasoline filling station, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. They were pretty cool. Next, we rode to the Headquarters of the CMA, the Christian Motorcycle Ministry in Hatfield, AR. I was pretty impressed with what I saw there. Instead of some sort of monumental edifice built with donated funds, I found utilitarian, multi-purpose buildings meeting the needs of the organization. I was happy to see and understand that the bulk of the incoming monies were going to assist those presenting the Gospel of Christ in many countries and supporting the outreach of the local CMA, USA chapters. Way too early, I said goodbye to Mike and headed toward Hulbert, OK where I camped for the night at the Sequoyah State Park.

9/2/2005 – In the morning, I headed to Claremore, OK where I would take a look at the **Will Rodgers Museum**. The ride was an assortment from oak covered hills so dense with trees, you couldn’t see any vistas to, rather nondescript flatlands. The Museum was real nice and had a lot of information about Will Rodgers life and many of his sayings. He was an awful “quick wit,” and sadly, he died too young at 55 when in August, 1935, in an airplane piloted by the famous one eyed pilot, Wiley Post it crashed in Point Barrow, Alaska. A few of his notable quotes are: *Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there. OR, I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts. And, Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else.*

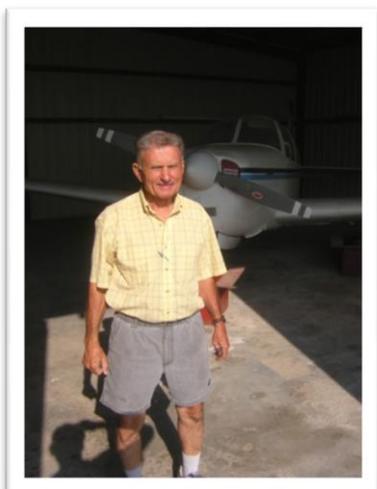


After that, I headed to Caldwell, KS for Air-fest 11, the largest gathering of rocket launches in the U.S.A. The closer I came to Kansas; the temperature seemed to be climbing along with the humidity. I arrived at the venue which was out in the middle of nowhere, in a farmer’s field. I arrived just before dusk and it was apparent the farmer had cut the grass, but, it had grown substantially since the cutting, so the ruts that his tractor made, were invisible. Although proceeding slowly, I got crossed up in a surprise rut, so crossed up that I had to lay the bike down which didn’t hurt anything but gee whiz, it was embarrassing. Fortunately, there were a few strong young men, close by, who helped me right the fallen Harley. Without further embarrassing events, I set up my tent and after a bite, settled in for the night.

One problem though, it had apparently rained not long before, and the night was so hot and stifling, even stripped down to the barest necessity, I could not get comfortable. It was plain old misery. Finally somewhere around 2:00 am, I fell asleep with little rivulets of sweat coursing down my face.

9/3/2005 - After a mostly miserable night and performing the usual morning camp things, I headed over to where the rockets were going to be launched and before long, the rockets were flying. Some were faster and went higher than others, and some were off the shelf kits made by kids. It was neat that the kid's rockets got all the same build-up from the announcer as the larger rockets. Some rockets used common rocket propellants and others, used a mixture of potassium nitrate and sugar. These were referred to as "sugar motors" and they left a prominent white smoke trail. The rockets would soar so high that you couldn't see them then, perhaps you would see a glint type flash of sunlight and perhaps 30 seconds later, a puff of white smoke as the parachute deployed.

Normally, they would have the chute pop at around 500 ft, so there was less of an opportunity for the Kansas wind to drift the rocket too far away. Throughout the day, it was almost continuous rocket action. I really enjoyed talking to several of the participants some of which sort of adopted me.



As the action neared the end for that day, I decided that I would impose on my friend Stan Cornealson, who I met while on a tour in Israel. Stan farms thousands of acres and I knew he would not mind me hanging out with him for a couple of nights. Stan graciously took me in and that night, I slept like a baby in air conditioned comfort.

9/5/2005 – After breakfast, I headed back out to the Rocket gathering. Today along with other launches, they were going to launch the largest rocket there it fell into the LDRS (*Large Dangerous Rocket Ship*) category. It stood nearly 20 ft tall and had several motors. The launch of this rocket was delayed a couple of hours due to the uncooperative

Kansas wind. It was just too strong. Finally, the launch team felt the wind had slackened enough and the countdown began. It was all pretty exciting and then the rocket rose to about 200 feet and the wind pushed it sideways and now it was flying parallel to the ground sort of like a cruise missile. Then, the second stage rockets fired shortly followed by the parachute opening a bit too late to save the rocket. It was an awesome spectacular failure which was sad when one considered all the work and expense that went into that short flight. Oh well, as they say, "back to the drawing board."



After these activities, I returned to Stan's place and after eating dinner out, we went to church and he had me tell a little bit about the dive expedition to the Red Sea I was involved in. If you, dear reader is interested; here is a link to the [pdf journal](#) of my trip.



9/6/2005- Today I rode some serious miles saying goodbye to the folks at the rocket gathering, I headed east toward Medicine Lodge, over a really quiet 2 lane highway. Then, I turned toward Greensburg Kansas where I stopped and had some doughnuts and coffee at a little shop on Main Street where I had some good conversation with

the middle aged woman that was the owner. Sadly, a couple of years later, in May 2007, a huge F-5 tornado, pretty much destroyed the whole town including the doughnut shop. I don't know if the owner survived or not. Greensburg has one attraction, the largest hand dug well anywhere which is worth the stop if you are heading that way. Just short of Dodge City, KS, I headed north and worked my way on the 2 lane roads to Oberlin. Just before getting there, I spotted an army tank prominently displayed near a little park. I am kind of a sucker for such things (and hand dug wells apparently,) so, of course, I stopped. My next near stop was the town of Oberlin, KS.



I really liked the brick main street and that this little town was really still alive as I noted as I slowly rolled through. Well, it was going to be dark soon so took a look at the map and saw that my options were limited so I started looking for an alternative. Before long, just past Lamar, KS, I spied a community church along the highway and behind it, was a clump of pine trees where I could pitch my little tent. So, that is what I did.

9/7/2005 - I got on the road fairly early and continued to Fort Collins, where I rode on Hwy 14 which is also known as the Poudre River Canyon Road. The road twists and turns while following the Poudre River and I really enjoyed this section of the trip. I rode this for several miles until it tied in with Hwy 40 near Rabbit Ears Peak and before long; I was in Steamboat Springs where I stopped to do a little food shopping. I continued and at the town of Hayden, CO, where I camped for the night at the Yampa River Start Park.



9/8/2005 – The Missing Day – (a confession of sorts). This trip was re-written after some years. Apparently, I either didn't keep a journal on this trip or I really think I had, but lost it. To further the confusion, I had ridden through much of the same country on other trips. Fortunately, I had photos taken nearly every day, and those really helped me remember many of the details. I am certain that I spent this night in Rangeley Colorado; I am a little less certain about the previous night. Despite this uncertainty, the rest of the trip is factual and properly dated.

9/9/2005 - Dawn came and although I was ready to get going I had to pack a bit more carefully because it had rained through much of the night and my tent was all wet. Thankfully, the rest of my gear had stayed dry. In Rangely, I stopped to admire an oil well that was pumping along, pausing for a closer look. By the time I had ridden to the intersection of Hwy 64 and 40, the sun had come out and was warming things nicely. I stopped at the rest stop near the intersection and opened my tent up so it could dry out. There was a nice brisk wind blowing, so, it didn't take long. I continued heading west hoping to get to the Salt Lake City area today. I went through the towns of Roosevelt, Myton and Duchesne, and ended up in the town of Helper, UT where I stopped and visited the museum there. Helper is a coal mining town, so the museum had a lot of information and artifact from the local mines.



There was tragedy here as well. In 1924 there was a coal dust explosion in the Castle Gate Mine that killed 171 miners, very sad. One of the geological features along the highway near Helper, is that a coal seam is exposed. The thickest part is about 6 feet thick then, it tapers down into nothing over 50 yards or so. For some reason, I had to stop to look more closely at it.

After satisfying my curiosity, I continued toward Provo but there was a problem brewing, well, actually a storm. Seeing the ominous build-up, I wisely donned my rain gear and bravely headed into the storm while heading west on Hwy 6. On part of the ride, the rain was coming down in bucketfuls and my speed slowed to about 30. Then, wow, a mini landslide came across the road as I slowed even further. Making it through that rough patch was pretty exhilarating.

After the storm drama tapered off, pretty soon I was in Provo and spotted a Cracker Barrel Restaurant, one of my favorites, so I had diner. After that, I rode to the Provo KOA Campground and soon, my tent was set up and I settled in for a little nap. My slumber didn't last long, the wind had picked up considerably, in fact, it was whistling through the large trees to my south so hard that it latterly sounded like a train passing close by.



At one point, I thought it was really a tornado, and said a prayer of protection, I really thought that “this was it,” and the “it” being death. After what seemed like too long, the wind suddenly subsided and soon things were back to normal. I think what I had experienced was a collapsing thunderstorm downburst which at times, can result in damage similar to a tornado. Glad I am here to write about it. It had really been a day of extremes but, I slept like a baby that night.

9/10/2005 – Today, my ride was taking me to Elko, NV because tomorrow, I was going to meet with some of my bicycling friends to do a little bicycling. The ride is pretty much straight forward on the Interstate 80, but, I noticed it was pretty cool today but instead of stopping and putting on another layer or two, I kept moving. This was really a bad idea because what was happening was that my body heat was slowly being sapped away, and by the time I got to my campsite at the South Fork Reservoir State Park, I was shivering and it took several hours in my sleeping bag to warm up.



9/11/2005 - After breakfast, I headed into Elko to check out the town. I had some time to kill since my bicycling friends would not arrive until nearly dark. I rode around taking in the sights.



Since I am interested in aviation, I made it a point to visit the local airport. While I was riding around and peering through the fences to see what kind of aircraft were there, I saw a small high wing airplane that looked most interesting. I parked my motorcycle and walked to the fence for a better view. The plane was pulled out in front of its hanger and there were a couple of men checking it out. While I was gawking, one of the men noticed me and came over to the fence and asked if “I needed help with something.” I replied that I was just checking out the plane and that I thought that it was

pretty neat. With that, he said, “would you like to go for a ride?” I said “you bet,” and he proceeded to open the gate and he told me where I could park my bike. The pilots name was Alan Wilson and the airplane was a Tandem Air Bike that he had built. Before long, I was loaded in the back and we were soon in the air. We followed the interstate for awhile and saw the area from mainly a fairly low altitude, which I enjoyed.

All too soon, my special surprise flight was over. Alan said that he was going to be selling his plane soon so that he could build a Bear Hawk, a bigger 4 place plane. Soon, the day was nearly over and I made my way back to camp to meet up with my bicycle buddies, Before long, Russ, Rob, Greg and Rob arrived and my days of quiet, by myself freedom, were over.



9/12/2005 - After breakfast, we loaded up our bicycles and headed to Lamoille Canyon. The Canyon Road is about 13 miles long and ascends up into the Ruby Mountains. It is such a stark difference from the high desert in the area, that if blindfolded and taken there, one would probably guess that they were in the high Sierra's. Needless to say, I was pretty much out of bicycling shape because of my road trip so, my bicycle has 21 gears, and, I used them all, especially the lowest gear for the grind up the canyon. The day was pleasant and the combination of weather, route and comradery, made for an exceptional days worth of activity.



9/13/2005 – The next day, we decided to change locations to a place just south of Stanley Idaho. It seems that Reese had a friend that owned the cabin there where we could stay, it was near the Sawtooth Mountains. Because I felt that they would soon tire with my various motorcycle-type stops, for gear on or off, fuel (every 150 miles), ect. I ventured off on a route by myself that I thought would be interesting. My route took me through the Duck Valley Indian Reservation and the route afforded some really nice vistas on an interesting road. Just south east of Boise, I turned onto

Hwy 21 to Stanley. The road meandered through the Sawtooth National Forest so there were many interesting sights along the way. I arrived at the cabin and found it to be large, luxuries and lovely. Reese, who likes to cook, made use a gourmet meal which was delicious. One of the things he prepared, was a bread dip made by concentrating balsamic vinegar and adding a bit of honey. This served along with a good grade of olive oil, is a wonderful bread dip appetizer.

9/14/2005 – Today, we decided to move again to another area for bicycle riding near Ukiah, Oregon. Russ and I were familiar with this area because we were on a nearly 500 mile ride a few years before that cut through that area, and it is a pretty place to ride. My route took me back through Stanley, Garden Valley and then Baker City, Oregon, Sumpter, were I spent some time checking out an old huge gold dredge that was left there.



After leaving Sumpter, I headed up following a road through the National forest. Naturally, the road turned to gravel but I was too committed to turn back. Added to that, darkness was falling soon. My greatest fear (other than hitting a deer), was that my drive belt would pick up a rock and ruin it. Once before, I had a rock do that, but, the small rock had left a hole dead center on the belt, and the damage didn't hurt. Thankfully, I had everything else I needed should I need to wait out the day if necessary. I kept plodding on, passing nobody else and eventually, with a sigh of relief, I made it to the paved highway and onto the campground. Not long afterward, the rest of the gang arrived so, we were all together again.

9/15/2005 – Today, we all had a nice bike ride, it really is nice country to ride bicycles in. There are rolling hills with some open grasslands and large patches of pines on the hills. So, in this area, you have both forests and vistas. We went on a nice ride and as typical, I was bringing up the rear and since we were on a highway, we came to a place where we had to turn around and head back to camp. Since I was lagging, now I was first and it soon became a game of “catch the old man.” Realizing that they were catching me, I went around a curve and grabbed my bike and hid behind some trees. Now when they came around the corner, they thought I was still ahead and that I had passed the next corner. I'm not certain how long the charade continued because now, they were racing each other to get to camp. It was all a lot of fun.

9/16/05 - Today we moved to another area about 250 miles closer to home. Our next campground was the La Pine State Park, near La Pine, Oregon. After quickly setting up camp, we headed out on a ride, mostly uphill, 19 miles to Paulina Lake. The ride was nice but a lot of up-hill, I like swooshing down the hills more than grinding up the hills but sometimes you have to pay your dues. After the ride, we just relaxed and enjoyed another one of Reese's gastronomic creations.

9/17/05 – Today, I realized that I was only about a 6 hour ride to home so; I told the group that I had a severe case of “home-ites. They understood completely and before long, I was heading home. I enjoyed the ride home and arriving eventually, I was glad to be home. It had been an adventuresome trip for sure, but, there really is “no place like home.” I thank my God for the ability, safety, and resources for such a trip, and, thankful for my sweet wife, Kathy that she let me go (again).

Keith



Life is good!



Too Many Flies near Mono Lake



Ruby Mountains