



## 5/24/2010 – Flying to Florida

I decided to take the Airport Shuttle and 0800 was the appointed time for me to be at Jack’s Restaurant in downtown Chico and so it was, we were there. One of the first things I noticed was that the “shotgun” position was available so I claimed it. This worked out to my advantage because before it was over, the 9 passenger van was completely filled with anxious travelers; some of which were nursing contagion spreading coughs. The driver and I talked a bit but not enough to shorten the seemingly longer than usual trip. I arrived with plenty of time to get through security without a lot of frustration and since I am a seasoned traveler, I made it through the magic force field without beeping. I had about an hour and a half until my flight so I went online of course and for lunch, I had a Chinese Chicken Salad from the Ca Pizza Kitchen for lunch, tasty yet overpriced. On the flight from Sacramento to Atlanta, I had a window seat in a row of three and my (75+ year old) companion on my right side was most interesting. He was a pilot in the Air Force and had flown many unusual aircraft. After his duty was complete, he flew corporate Jets for 30 or so years. I could tell that he had not landed recently at the dental office due to his stinky breath. Before asking him questions, I would carefully weigh the importance of the question against the anticipation of his odiferous vapor. Needless to say, some questions went unasked. Since I really like aviation, my conversations with him helped to ease the awfully long flight. The only other unforgettable memory was that the young child sitting in the seat in front of me apparently C\*\*pped his pants, which made me long for the good ole days of just stinky breath.

After a gasping arrival in Atlanta, not much to say except it seems to be a busy place and the Pastrami Sandwich was not as good as the picture looked. My flight to Daytona Beach was in a much smaller airplane; imagine a cigar tube with seats. Thankfully, I had an extra ½ inch of knee room. My seatmate for this flight a man who’s wife sat in the row behind us. I traded the woman so she could sit with husband and my new seatmate arrived and he was Peter Shifley, PhD from New Orleans which was a most interesting man who seemed to be impressed with his

accomplishments and according to him was “well known.” I think I heard him say that I should “Google him” which I will do sometimes because he was a Police Psychologist and had worked on some interesting cases. With my good ear on the side away from him, conversation was a bit difficult. He asked me a lot of questions about my work and interests and I described myself as some one that was not “well known.” He seemed fascinated with my work background and asked detailed questions like: what is the fire retardant made of. We talked about travels and I told him about the dive trip I took to the Red Sea and had been to Israel 4 times. At one point, he said “you are one of the most interesting retired people, I have ever met.” My head bumped the ceiling of the plane momentarily as my head swelled. I gave him a card and we parted company after the really short one hour flight. At Daytona Beach, I retrieved my bags and headed to the exit when my cell phone rang, Wayne was calling, he had just arrived. We headed to his house and without fanfare; I found my room and soon went to sleep.

### **05/25/2010 – New Smyrna Beach**



I woke up about 0800 and headed downstairs where Wayne was relaxing. We drove over to his daughter’s place that they had recently bought. It was a brick veneered house of nearly 2,000 sf with an enclosed pool on a lake. The neighborhood was real nice, quiet and the neat part was the price of the place, 130,000 dollars. After that, we went to breakfast and then out to Wayne’s ranch where the Harley was stored. After squirting a couple shots of oil into the cylinders and reinstalling the plugs, the motor soon roared to life, howbeit on one cylinder for a while. Soon I rode to Wayne’s house and did a bit of nesting in to get things organized. After that, we drove

to the actual Daytona Beach and Wayne showed me some of the historical features that had not yet been swallowed up by the big hotels that now line the once famous speedway. Back to Wayne’s for a short nap and then, time to eat of course, I had a Mediterranean Salad with Greek dressing, pretty good but not worth writing home about, oops, I guess I did.

### **05/26/2010 – New Smyrna Beach to Savannah – 267 miles**

I was on the road from my cousin’s house at 0800 and it was my plan to ride for an hour or so, and then stop and get some breakfast. I rode through Daytona Beach where to the right, the ocean view is completely blocked by fancy hotels. But soon, the solid wall soon thinned out and I was afforded some nice ocean vistas as I motored along. Along my left were homes, expensive homes, many of which were interesting to look at with their dormers and turrets. I got to my first attraction, Fort Matanzas and still had not found any place to eat and with my hunger in a near panic mode, I did a GPS search for a McDonalds and saw that there was one about 8 miles away. So I bypassed the Fort and headed for breakfast. It was during this time that I re-learned that when the GPS says 8 miles, it’s air miles. Turns out that Mickey Dee’s was more like 15 miles past my first attraction. Anyway, long story short, after a much needed breakfast burrito and against my hatred of backtracking,

I backtracked to Fort Matanzas. While I have visited large forts like Fort Jefferson out from the Keys, this fort is likely to be the smallest one I will probably ever see. The size of the fort is 50 ft by 50 ft with an observation deck rising about 30 ft and it is made from blocks of Coquina, a quarried stone which is basically compressed and compacted shells. This material is great for forts since it is somewhat spongy and absorbs the impact of whatever cannonballs may come its way.



This fort, more of an outpost really, was staffed by a crew of 7 and it was located at a narrow point on the Matanzas River, a key inland waterway which went all the way to St. Augustine. After a short boat ride, we tour-ees spent about 45 minutes exploring the various rooms and levels of the fort. What an incredibly lonely outpost this must have been for the Spanish soldiers staffing it.

Next I rode about 15 miles to St. Augustine FL. The approach to the town was over a bridge and the town had some really interesting historical buildings down the main stretch.

Nearby was another fort, Fort Castillo de San Marcos. While in line to pay the five dollar fee, I teased the family ahead of me, asking them if they wanted to “adopt an older son.” This got quite a laugh but then, the man behind me said that he would adopt me; showing me his old guy entrance card. So we stepped up and included me in his free family entry. I felt a little funny about the basic dishonesty but it happened so fast, I didn’t have much time to object, yaaa, that’s what happened. This Spanish fort was pretty big and had a commanding view of the harbor and several examples of mortars and cannon and I took about an hour looking around; including a quick walk to the main street to see some of the old buildings a little closer.

After that, I headed toward Savannah mostly by freeway which I don’t really enjoy. In looking at the maps, I really did not have the option of taking back roads because of the way the coastline is arranged. I arrived at the Fort McAlliste State Historic Park, my stop for the night just after 1700 hrs. The campground was real woodsy and soon after selection my (\$30.00) tent site, I discovered what the buggy means in the



term “muggy and buggy. Deerflies, very pesky and are capable of delivering a painful bite but if you are quick, you can shoo them away before they bite. Between deet from the insect repellent and me shooing, I managed not to be bitten. A can of Stag Chili for supper and a quick shower then time for bed. While bedtime started out a bit warm, as it progressed, it cooled nicely and even though I was comfortable, my sleep was restless.

### **5/27/2010 – New Smyrna Beach to Savannah – 267 miles**

Morning came at 0700 and by 0730, I was packed up and heading out. Cracker Barrel was nearby for breakfast and I had an interesting waitress. She looked to be about 25 and she had a rather thick Southern accent. She was efficient but a bit overly charming, always spending lots of charming eye time at every customer interaction. One time, she actually curtsied after I had requested some honey for my biscuit; I think that was a first. During tip consideration time, I labored between the smaller normal tip or, the larger generous tip finally settling on the normal tip since I was feeling a bit manipulated by her. After that, I rode to the local Harley dealer to get a 20,000 mile service. I had originally wanted to do the service at New Smyrna Beach HD, but they wanted \$240.00 more than the dealer here in Savannah. It really pays to check around.

The service took from 0900 to almost 1300 hrs but happily, the total cost was only \$255.00, a good savings when



one considers the quote was \$330.00. From the Harley dealer, I rode about 15 miles to see Fort Pulaski.

Fort Pulaski is a large brick fort built with 25 million bricks. Construction started in 1929 and during the Civil War, the fort which was in Confederate hands was shelled by Northern troops. A surrender was secured after a bombardment of only 30 hours. In the intense shelling, a hole was actually blasted through one of the corners which greatly threatened the powder magazine. Instead of forcing an explosive outcome with resulting great loss of life, wisdom prevailed and a surrender flag was flown. When I was walking around the outside of the Fort, the damage from the battle is still readily visible; some of the shell blast holes still contained the actual unexploded shell. I enjoyed seeing this fort on its little island and incidentally, this is the same little island where John Wesley (founder of the Methodists) landed on February 6, 1736 where he proceeded to preach his first sermon in America. I enjoyed exploring the Fort but, the day was getting long and I needed to head toward Charleston so I got on the road. My route passed through the old restored section and waterfront of Savannah which is filled with little shops. Soon I was on a really high bridge which crossed some kind of waterway, the boundary between Georgia and South Carolina, and I was afforded the neatest view of the old town area, it was simply beautiful but no photos, just a quick look. The road to the Charleston area was mostly 2 lanes which cut through a forest of trees with occasional open everglade type areas, to remind me that the coast was really nearby.



About 20 miles from Charleston, I took a 2 mile detour to see the brick shell remains of an old church which was built between 1745 and 1755. In 1779, it was burned to the ground by British soldiers then rebuilt in 1826, and then burned again by Federal forces in 1865, never to be rebuilt. All that is left is the substantial brick shell and brick columns. Well that's about it, the weather today was clear and warm but not too bad.



A tunnel through the trees

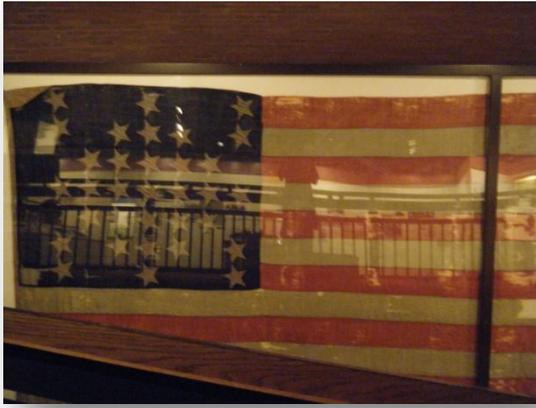
I saw the cheapest fuel so far on the trip today \$2.57 for regular in SC. Tomorrow, Fort Sumter and Charleston await. One thing that happened on my ride today was there was a pickup pulling a flat bed trailer that was lightly loaded. The trailer had tandem axles and the right rear was flat and the tire was separated from the rim's bead, I could smell hot rubber. Even though they passed me at a good clip, I speeded up and let him know he had a problem and he signaled back "it's OK, I know about it." Well like my son, Evan says, "it's not my problem."

### 5/28/2010 – Charleston, NC

The dawn was bright and clear and after I did all the normal morning things, I rode toward Historic Charleston, stopping at the Waffle House for breakfast (one of my favorite breakfast places) and I had eggs and guess what, a waffle. On the way out to my bike, three black bikers wearing "Outsiders" back patches, pulled up next to where I was parked. I gave them a respectful ice breaking nod, while they were still backing their bikes into the space. Two of the outsiders were riding black and chrome HD Road Kings, black and chrome, similar to mine. We struck up a conversation and talked about our bikes, I could see the respect in their eyes when I told them I had ridden from Nor-Cal and saw the respect dwindle after explaining that I parked the bike in Daytona for the winter. Soon after a bit of chatting, we parted company after cordial handshakes. My next stop was the Charleston Visitors Center where I would book a Grayline tour of Charleston which included a boat ride to Fort Sumter. I found the parking lot and there was an attendant who told me as I approached the gate that: "you can't park your motorcycle in the lot, you will have to go around the corner. I thanked her for the directions and proceeded around the corner but didn't see any indication of where I should park. I pulled over and saw a door man, a black man and he was coming my way because he had sensed my confusion. He pointed down a driveway between some buildings and said there was metered parking for motorcycles there. This man seemed to be a man happy with his employment and life in general. I thanked him for helping me and told him that he had a great smile.



Tour tickets in hand, I looked at some of the displays in the Center and soon, it was time for the tour. Our guide was Bob and Bob was a native Charlestontonein (if there is such a word.) For those who have seen the movie, Cool Hand Luke, Bob was a clone of the Bossman, you'll remember, "what we've got here is.... failure to communicate." With Bob's easily understood southern drawl, and a hard to describe laugh which was somewhere a burp and a grunt, he managed to keep our attention during the whole tour. He appeared to know his town and had many stories, some of them scandalous about the past owners of many of the historical houses.



The city was spared complete razing unlike many of the important southern cities so there are many Civil War period houses, mainly Victorian, still standing.

Some of the houses were constructed in the early 1700's and I enjoyed seeing them on the tour and later, while walking past many of them. Soon, it was time for the boat ride out to Fort Sumter. As some of you history buffs may remember, this fort was the scene of the opening battle of the Civil War. The original Fort was two stories high and made completely of brick. Battle damage is visible from when the Confederates blasted the Fort into surrender and later, when the Northern Army won it back, all but destroyed it. What is left is some of the lower level with many of the original canon in position and the neatest thing of all, the original large battle flag was displayed for viewing, what a cool piece of history that was. When the hour to see the fort was up, we boarded the boat and headed back. A man and his wife sat next to me and he is a Nuclear Engineer and I learned what that job entails and had a nice conversation with him.



After the tour was over, I rode to a parking structure near the middle of town and found the BBQ restaurant that Bob said was the best; the name of the place is "Sticky Fingers BBQ." I ordered the ribs and pulled pork combo and it was a hefty amount and delicious, for a modest price I might add. After dinner, I walked to one of the real fancy old homes on Meeting Street, and took a tour.

The house had an interesting history and was featured in several movies including, Gone with the Wind. The house was filled with furnishings from the 1800's and earlier. Too much to really put to words, I guess a couple of examples would be an original portrait of a young General George Washington and chandeliers and other fixtures, made by Tiffney of New York. I sum up by saying that the house and furnishings were pretty mind blowing.



This home was in "Gone with the Wind"

After a considerable walk while enjoying the houses, I made it back to the parking structure and collected my bike. Upon checking out with the parking attendant, she told me in no uncertain terms that I "was not supposed to park a motorcycle in any of the lots in Charleston." I told her that I didn't know and would not do it again. I would have asked her the purpose for this law but since she was ensconced behind bullet proof glass, hearing was difficult. Oh, remember my comment on "Southern Hospitality" when the waitress curtsied? Well, I think I may have seen an example of "Southern Hostility." After I left the parking structure, I was attempting to turn right as the traffic, also

turning right, would allow. As I was working forward, two ladies, and I use the term loosely, cut in front of me to cross the street even though I had the green. I said to the ladies, you know, that green light is for me, to which she replied "EAT S\*\*T." To which I replied, "thanks and, God bless you." Southern hostility? Maybe not since there was no detectable southern twang in her retort. After that, a stop at Wal-Mart then I headed to my campsite. It had been a long day, full of sites and I was tired.



**5/29/2010 – Charleston, SC to Table Rock State Park, SC – 200+ miles**

It rained last night around 0330, quite hard with some loud cracks of lightning. My trusty tent worked as designed and kept me dry. The morning dawned with a mixture of sun and large puffy clouds but thankfully, no liquid sunshine. While out and about yesterday I learned that the world's first submarine, the Hunley, had been excavated and has been undergoing a preservation process for the last 10 years in nearby North Charleston. A check of their website showed that they gave tours only on Sat and Sun, each week and as luck would have

it, today is Saturday. I arrived around 1000 and soon the tour started. The Hunley is suspended in recirculation water precisely at the same angle as it laid in the mud of the bay and was really a treat to see. Too long a story to tell the history of this sub and the many men who died while aboard but there is one story I must tell. When the archeologist were excavating the remains of the sailors who died during Hunley's final cruise, they were looking for something very specific. According to tradition, one of the sailors aboard had earlier fought in one of the wars many battles and his wife in waiting, had given her love a \$20.00 gold piece to remember her by. During one of the battles, the sailor was shot, but it was a lucky shot in that the bullet had struck the gold piece, denting it and saving the life of the man. He had it engraved, something about being his "life preserver" only using several more words. Sure enough, the gold piece, dented and engraved was found. It (the gold piece) was offered to a relative but she declined it saying she felt she had no right to it. Because of the verifiable history of this coin, it was said that the insurance company recommended that it be insured for 10 million dollars. Well, all my interest satisfied, I headed toward Asheville, NC, intercepting Hwy 178 near Dorchester. For awhile, it was mainly urban sprawl with of what is commonly known as "eyesores" sprinkled in, but after maybe 15 miles, the area became more rural with many well maintained homes, mostly brick with dormers. I came to Harleyville and of course stopped to get a picture of the sign with my Harley in view. After two or three hours of riding and after lunch, I noticed the weather was looking pretty black ahead so as the first raindrops fell, I went ahead and donned my raingear which is easier said than done. For awhile, the rain was not too bad but soon this changed and raindrops of monsoon proportions commenced to pound down. During one of the heaviest downpours, I needed to make a gas stop so I lingered at the pumps as long as I could. The problem here is the storms seem to move real slowly and so if you try to wait it out, it may be a few hours. Bravely, some would say foolhardy, I started out during the downpour and noted the occasional lightning somewhere in the area. One strike's thunder was heard only a couple of seconds after the flash, so it was close. After about 30 minutes, the downpour slowed and it lightly rained for the following 30 minutes. Stopping for some coffee at McD, I saw something I had not seen before. A grown man of perhaps 40 years, hamburger in hand after taking a couple of bites and he heads into of all places, the bathroom. I shudder to think why anyone could come up with reason to do that. Yuck! I continued riding until about 1830 and went to the Table Rock S.P. Fearing the worst because of the holiday, I inquired about a tent site for the night.



The lady said that they were all full. I asked her about my options and said something about it being a long day and I was getting tired and she said for me to stand by. They had a “spare” campsite for emergencies and she was checking with the boss to see if I qualified, and thankfully, I did. I got to my campsite and a literal 5 minutes later, it started to rain, so my Camel 60 second tent, went up in 40 seconds. I settled in and listened to Rush for about an hour on my MP3 player, then after the rain stopped, ate supper and did some typing.

**5/30/2010 – Table Rock State Park, SC – to the KOA near Asheville - 96 Miles**

I slept well and ate a Pop Tart and coffee breakfast and got on the road. I was heading for Maggie Valley, NC. The geography was getting more mountainous and the mainly hardwood forest was thick. A sign said that for the next 32 miles, trucks were not advised because of the 9% grades and steep corners, just my kind of road. Sure enough, the road was as advertised and climbed through wonderful scenic woods and past running streams. If I did not know otherwise, I would swear I was in Oregon. The weather was cloudy with blue patches but dry, just right for riding. Along the way, I kept looking at my watch because being Sunday, I wanted to go to worship and sure enough, about 15 minutes till 1100, I came upon a nice Baptist Church. Not knowing their local dress code, I found a private wide spot and changed into my Sunday best, a solid blue polo shirt, well, at least it was not a tee shirt. A man named Gene greeted me in the parking lot and he introduced himself and walked with me into the church. The folks were real nice and I enjoyed the service in which Communion was served.



After the service, a nice couple button-holed me and asked about my travel plans but soon, it was time to say good bye so I headed to Maggie Valley to the: Wheels through Time Motorcycle Museum. The museum is privately owned and family ran and it is an extensive collection of American made motorcycles. Unlike a regular museum, most all the complete motorcycles are in running condition and this was proved by the owner’s son starting an old bike with an inline 4 cyl engine and while chatting with him, he said if there was anything I wanted to hear run, to let him know. One motorcycle I saw running was the rarest motorcycle in the world. It was a bike with a company name that nobody knew anything about. The bike was found walled in, wrapped in oil cloth in a building in

Chicago. The bike had belonged to Steve McQueen’s collection at one time. I saw a Harley Davidson powered airplane, mining train engine and a HD power saw. One item was a rocket engine made by HD for use in drones which they built up until 1990. All in all a wonderful, must see collection who’s owner prowls the floor, proud to show and share what is his and helpful to explain questions about some of the different motorcycle controls. After the motorcycles, I found a KOA located about 15 miles from Asheville where I will stay for at least the next couple of nights. 75 feet from my tent-site is a 150 ft cell tower so I should be able to send the last 3 days worth of journal to you all.

## 5/31/2010 – Asheville Area - 73 Miles

Oh, what an interesting day I had yesterday but as the morning broke, any adventure and fun looked doubtful. This is because it rained most of the night and as I woke, the drumming of steady rainfall greeted me and the sky was in a dark and gloomy mood when it said “good morning.” When there is a lull in the rain, it is possible to make a break for it and get out of the tent and get the gear necessary for riding in the rain. If there is no break, from the time you step out of the tent, everything you need is in the process of getting soaked. So biding my time, I read some of my novel, a whodunit story about wildland firefighters that were burned over on a fire near Chester, CA and when they emerged from their fire shelters, well, one didn’t. He had survived the fire but not the knife plunged into his heart. Then bored with reading, I listened to a recorded Rush program and by 1000, the rain stopped, at least temporarily.

I made a dash outside and quickly donned my raingear and assembled whatever I thought I would need for my trip downtown, and got under way. The lull was just that and soon it was raining quite heavily as I rode toward Asheville. Soon, I found a Waffle House and escaped the rain for a while and as I left my breakfast spot, I noticed the rain was slacking off a bit, heading toward a drizzle.



I found the downtown and eventually found a parking spot in front of a historical multi-story brick hotel that had been converted into low income senior housing. Across the street was a “large historical shopping arcade” with some interesting history, too long to go into here but here is a tidbit. During WWII, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution was stored in a vault in the basement of the arcade. The thinking was that Asheville was the last place in the country that would be considered for bombing. Asheville has a beautiful and thriving downtown spanning many blocks and filled with artists wares of every type imaginable. Most of the buildings are original and good examples of Art Deco and Gothic design which I really love looking at. I decided to take the Grayline tour as a good way to kill a couple of hours and picked up my ticket and, rats! I just missed the hourly stop. I saw on the map that the previous stop was across the downtown area so I started walking. Along the way, I saw an old Kress five

and dime and the old Woolworth store that still had a working original soda fountain and many interesting stores and shops, and sidewalk cafes’. Soon I boarded the tram and had an enjoyable tour of Asheville and saw a lot of historical places like the two government buildings that the pilot of the Memphis Bell flew his plane between when the plane and crew were on their national, morale-boosting tour. The buildings were not wide enough for the B-24’s wings, so the pilot (an Asheville 24 year old) performed a 60 degree banking turn to make it. The tour guide said he got into a bit of trouble for that stunt. We saw the house that was in the movie with Sandra Bullock called: 28 days, that was a thrill, and I saw lots of other interesting sites. As the tour progressed, so did the weather and soon the sun was shining, lifting spirits everywhere. With the tour completed, I rode to Chimney Rock, a huge rock about 23 miles east, that affords a wonderful view of Lake Lure. The road was winding with switch-backs and deep green with forests and streams. I arrived and paid my \$14.00 admission and took the 25 story elevator, then hiked to the top of the rock. The view was great but an even higher view was possible by hiking for about 15 minutes up a multitude of steps and feeling the need for a little exercise, I made my way up.



After looking at the view and taking a couple of snaps, I headed down and when I was almost to the gift shop where the elevator was, here was T.V. and Anna Oshman, a couple Kathleen and I met while on a tour of Israel several years ago. I called them by name and they were completely blank as to who I was, the look on their faces were priceless. They live in Raleigh, NC and were showing some out of town friends, the sights. We had a nice conversation and they invited me to come and stay with them but, I am going in a different direction. Soon we said bye and I rode to the little town of Black Mtn., then back to Cracker Barrel in Asheville, then to camp. Although a bit rainy off and on during the ride from Chimney Rock, the day ended dry which was a good thing. At the campground, I walked up to the restroom and while I was brushing my teeth, a man came in and ensconced himself on the pot in one of the stalls, while he smoked pot. Meanwhile, his 12 year old son was occupying the stall next to his, pretty sad. Other than seeing the occasional on the pot, pot smoker, I really like Asheville and the surrounding area. Since it is a bit higher than 2,000 ft, the average mid-summer temperature is 82. I think I could live here. 5/31/2010 – Asheville Area - 73 Miles

### **6/1/2010 – Asheville to Wytheville, VA - 240 Miles**

Today's attraction is the ride itself but first, I had a little maintenance to attend to, I need a new front tire. I have been keeping an eye on the tread of the front tire for some time, and since riding in the rain may become a regular off and on event, I opted for a new tire rather than trying to squeezing another 500 or so miles out of the present tire. I made some calls and found a place that would supply the tire and all the work associated with it for \$117.00, and not only that, he could do it right away. I found Hagan's Motorcycle shop without getting lost and was soon talking to Hagan who said he once rolled a van in the Upper Park in Chico, he didn't go into details. The work was done in about ½ and hour and I was happy for the bargain price and not waiting, I rounded the sum to 120.00 and threw in an extra 5 spot just to say thanks. Not to let my mild generosity go unchallenged, Hagan ask what size shirt I wore and disappeared, and soon returned with one of his shop tee shirts for me. Wow, what a swell guy! I told him about my interest in mopeds and he said for me to stop at a moped shop I passed on the way in. He said the fellow makes his own bikes and that I should take a look. Long story short, the bikes were wonderfully made and the owner gave me a CNC cut sprocket for free, I really don't have a use for it but is sure is pretty and I know someone that might like it.



Before leaving Asheville, I was going to stop at the 12 Bones BBQ which was said to be always in the top 10 in the country in fact, our current President stopped there just a few weeks ago. When I arrived, I saw the line sprawling out into the parking lot with about 10 people outside the door. I didn't want to wait so I opted for a Big Mac and fries at one of the 10 fanciest McD's in the world, the Biltmore McDonalds. While the Mac was the same as I remember from even my High School days, there was a Grand Piano in the corner and marble floors. I downed my lunch to the tune of "The Way We Were" and many other old favorites.



Soon I was on the Blue Ridge Parkway and what a lovely ride it is. It runs for 469 miles, mostly along the famous Blue Ridge, a major mountain chain that is part of the Appalachian Mountains. It is two lanes and seems to be designed for 45 mph, the speed limit. What seem interesting to me, is that in the hundred plus miles I was on it, there were no stops at all and a minimal amount of traffic control signs. For the most part, there was not anyone behind me or in front of me. A very different ride which was beautiful with all the shades of green blended like a huge shag carpet. I stopped at the small artsy town of Blowing Rock and had some coffee. Soon I was off the Parkway and onto some good old 2 lane highway. North of the

town of Jefferson, NC, the scene passing by me was really getting pretty, rolling hills of green pasture with forest on the mountains behind and farms with silos. The area reminded me a lot of Wisconsin with its picturesque "Rockwell" type of scenes over every hill. With about an hour of light left, I arrived in Wytheville, VA and the GPS said there was a KOA about 5 miles east of the town and that is where I camped for the night. I fixed myself a meal from a box called "A Taste of Thai" and it was pretty decent. Well 0930, time for a shower, reading and lights out. It was a fun and interesting day and no rain, which is always a plus. Tomorrow, Coalwood WV, home of the Rocket Boys.

#### **6/2/2010 –Wytheville, VA – to Clifton Forge, VA - 280 Miles**



I got up fairly early and it was a bit foggy outside. I ate a big breakfast at the Bob Evans Restaurant which had remarkable, good tasting coffee. Soon I was off to Coalwood as directed by the GPS. Why Coalwood? Homer Hickam wrote at least 3 books that I have read, two of them about growing up in the company town of Coalwood. I really enjoyed Homer's writing style and one of the books was made into a movie that some of you may have seen, it is called October Sky. The movie is about some high school boys that took up the hobby of building rockets and they were known locally as the Rocket Boys. Homer broke loose from Coalwood life, and eventually ended up working for NASA. I enjoyed all but the last few miles

to Coalwood when the GPS directed me on what will be known as a fairly un-decent gravel road so bad, I evoked the Lord's help and thankfully, He did.

Coalwood in a real sense is dilapidated and would serve as a poster child example of what happens when the only employer closes doors. Most of the miner's homes are lived in, but lived in while the house is falling apart. It is really a shame because when it was a mine town, it had all the things a community needed, to live comfortable lives. Coalwood, like many small towns in this part of WV, lies in a gully bottom and the layout of the town's streets are dictated by the terrain.

There is one business in town, a combination gas station and store. I rode the streets and stopped and took a few photos of places like the Olga Mine Machine Shop, and the home where Homer Hickam resided. I also rode out to the place where Homer and his friends fired off their rockets; there is a replica of the building they used.



Olga Mine Machine Shop

Each fall, Homer comes home and the town celebrates a festive week in commemoration of the Rocket Boy's achievements.

After Coalwood, I rode about 35 miles to Beckley, WV where there is a Coal mine tour at a place called the Exhibition Coal Mine. The site used to be an active underground coal mine and in the years after the mine was shut down, a preservation group was formed and many mining camp buildings were moved, preserved and restored. The collection included miner's homes, the

church, school house and superintendent's home. They also have a really nice museum all related to mining of course. The tour part was pretty neat as we boarded a train with an electric engine and went into the bowels of the earth. The coal seam was only about 3 feet high but the grade of coal was very high which fetched the best prices of the day. Our guide was a former coal miner that worked for more than 35 years and the things he talked about and showed us were really interesting. One of the more unique things is that they are careful to watch for methane buildups toward the ceiling and if they catch it at the proper time, they actually light them off so it can burn off. He also explained how now days, they use glue for instillation of the ceiling bolts which makes for a stronger, and safer ceiling.



After the tour and looking at the displays, I wanted to get another 100 miles toward Williamsburg so I rode and soon grew weary of the interstate and planned a route which would take me in a more direct route, howbeit using back roads. I had about an hour before sunset so I figured I had better find somewhere to camp. I pulled over and soon a local stopped to help. I told him of my need and he said there was a state campground nearby and on my route. I got the name of the park and plugged it into the GPS and sure enough, there it was, about 20 miles later, I arrived and found a spot and set up camp. Later, I was looking at the map because my senses said I had gone in a big circle and sure enough, I had. I was only 10 miles away from where I had left the highway and I had

probably ridden 40 miles. Oh well, that's life in the fast lane.



Some of the buildings at Appomattox, VA

### 6/3/2010 Clifton Forge, VA – to Williamsburg, VA - 275 Miles

The road to Williamsburg took me for about 40 miles back on the Blue Ridge Parkway which was nice and relaxing. My route took me past Appomattox, VA where the Civil War basically ended so I stopped and spent a couple of hours at the historical park, looking through the various displays and buildings. When I arrived, the flag was at half staff and the ranger was wearing a black band across his badge. This is because tragically, the day before, one of their co-workers, a maintenance man was killed out in front of the park when a car careened out of control, left the roadway and struck him. Of course the staff was all feeling stressed out in the wake of that

event and I think it was helping them to talk about it.

At Lynchburg, I made a run through the town to check out the old brick buildings and they had a lot of them. Most of ride to Williamsburg was fairly nondescript, a highway with a forest of oaks on both sides and limited options because of the local waterways which disrupted more direct routes of travel. I found the KOA with no problem and after about an hour, a thunder shower was moving in so I put together a shelter using the blue tarp and tent poles I had bought at where else? Wal-Mart. The shelter worked great and afforded me a place to sit rather than being confined to my tent.

### 6/4/2010 Williamsburg, VA - a few Local Miles



The skies were clear when I awoke and after breakfast, I rode about 7 miles to Colonial Williamsburg and was soon there. There are a number of buildings both original and restored and re-constructed. I toured many of the buildings and talked to the period workers and artisans who are employed by the Park Service to be living examples of history. This is a wonderfully

historical place, so early in our nation's history, I won't go into any of it because it would be too boring but I spent nearly 7 hours there and I felt that that was probably enough. On the way back to camp, I stopped at yet another BBQ place that was recommended by some people I sat near, they were right, it was really good. After I arrived at camp, I did my laundry and there was another evening thunder storm, wet but not as wet as yesterday. Tomorrow, I plan on spending some time in York Town and going to the Mariners' Museum in Newport News where the turret from the USS Monitor is kept, and maybe a ride across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge if I have time.

## 6/5/2010 Williamsburg, VA - 189 Local Miles

What a wonderful day of exploring here in the Williamsburg area. While heading to the Harley Shop about 15 miles from here, I got the nagging feeling that I needed to take another close look at the fuel valve in order to see exactly what was causing it to leak. Maybe the tank was not venting properly, maybe it was a loose connector. At any rate, all day long, it would not leak so I will keep an eye on it for when it eventually starts leaking again. It is a nice weather day here in Williamsburg with no likelihood of rain this evening. But nice is relative because it is probably 85 degrees and very humid and I not only have "Off" slathered all over my exposed parts, I have bug bites, the underside of my left arm looks like I have Chicken Pox. And as I sit here, I realize that if I type a little too fast, my face will actually drip sweat. Muggy and buggy they say, and they are right!



Cannon from the USS Monitor

My first stop was at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, and I spent a bit more than 3 hours there, it was really much more than I expected. One large room was full of large ship models, some of which were 15 ft long and longer and they had several models of different kinds of ship engines which would function at the touch of a button. The jewel of The Mariners' Museum's collection is The Miniature Ships of August F. Crabtree. These amazing ship models, crafted by artist/carver August F. Crabtree, depict the evolution of boat building from a primitive raft to a Venetian galleass decorated with 359 carved figures. Crabtree worked on the collection for 30 years and his models were smaller than the larger models I saw, perhaps the longest being 2.5 feet, the detail was

exquisite. Some of his ships had people that stood about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch high, they were so detailed, and the little people had individual faces with different expressions, amazing. One area had old time movies from the 1930's which showed how ships were built and it was fascinating seeing a 1200 ton press shaping a ships drive shaft out of a massive chunk of red hot steel.

Well the big draw for me seeing this museum was they have a collection of remains from the USS Monitor here. As a young man of perhaps 12, I read the story of John Erickson's invention which was mocked by some as the "Cheese-box on a Raft." Well the little Cheese-box proved that it was a force to be reckoned with in the 4 hour battle with the Ironclad Merrimack. 2 guns v perhaps 16 and the battle came to a draw. In addition to seeing a wonderful film on the difficulties of raising of the turret, I saw the turret and cannons resting in its preserving bath, like the Hunley, they had mockups of the ship in full scale and a wonderful collection of small items like dinnerware and lanterns. Like I said, it was much better than I expected, they even had part of a hull plate that I could touch.

After the museum, I went for a ride across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge which is about 20 miles long. The toll was pretty steep, being a total of \$17.00 for the privilege of going in both directions. It was sort of like going for a motorcycle ride in the ocean since there were a lot of boats out fishing, most of them being smaller pleasure craft. On the north side of the bay, I picked a town named Oyster as my destination; thinking perhaps I could get a clam dinner. Sadly to say, while the town of Oyster had a cute harbor, alas, no eating establishment. I opted for a burger, no fries at McD's and one of their \$1.00 teas since keeping hydrated is a big issue here. Because the ride was a bit long, when I got back to camp, I took a nap being careful not to move and thus generate heat. All in all, a good day and as darkness falls, it is getting cooler and that is a good thing.



Near Oyster, VA east of the Chesapeake Bay

## 6/6/2010 Williamsburg, VA - to - Fredericksburg, VA 233 Miles

I woke up at 0615 and felt fully rested but it is a wonder, the people across from me were drinking, talking and laughing until about 0200. I thought about pitching a complaint but it was easier to plug in my earplugs which I use a lot. It's funny, I can fall asleep in front of the TV but if I am in a bed trying to sleep, it has to be quiet. I got packed up and got a little payback when I fired up the Harley because there is just no way to start a Harley quietly. It did get the desired result when one of the Mister Big Mouth's, poked his hung-over head up in the window of the tent. It was a funny arrangement over there, one

woman and two men, all in their 30's, who knows? It might have been brothers and their sister, or .... something. The air was cool as I rode toward Charlottesville, where Thomas Jefferson's home: Monticello, is located on top of a hill south east from the town. Monticello is not only a beautiful place, it is an amazing place. The historical aspect hits you when the tour guide says that the last person to do any modifying to the home was Jefferson himself. The home is furnished appropriate to the time period with several of Jefferson's actual treasures on display, like some of his books and a set of Elk antlers brought to him by the explorers, Lewis and Clark. Jefferson, the man that penned the Constitution's famous words "all men are created equal," was the same man that owned a number of slaves and freed only a few during his lifetime and basically, they had to buy their freedom. He described slavery as holding a Wolf by the ears, can't keep holding on and can't let him go. He foresaw that ending slavery would cause bloodshed, 40 years before the Civil War. I saw some of his labor saving inventions and enjoyed the large gardens on the grounds including a large vegetable garden. I walked down the hill and took a picture of his grave.



Monticello

While taking the shuttle bus up the hill from the visitor's center, I was talking to the driver about the area and she said that there was a "poled ferry" about 20 miles away, the last one in America. Well, that is just the sort of thing I like so after seeing my fill of Monticello, I headed toward the Historic, Hatton Ferry. This ferry has been in operation since 1870 and it is pretty simple in its operation. A single cable spans the James River, perhaps 20 ft above the river. The barge is connected by another cable that runs through 2 pulleys which are on the main cable. By turning winches on the barge, they can change the angle of the ferry so that the current will actually move the ferry across the river. For reasons not fully known to me, they have to pole the ferry back across the river

using fiberglass poles approximately 15 ft in length, so, that is why it is called the "poled ferry." After that interesting experience, I headed toward my stop for the night, the KOA near Fredericksburg, VA. The sky was pretty dark and threatening but no real rain. At my fuel stop, a shirtless man on a Harley said that there was a tornado watch in the area. When I got to the campground, I opted for the relative luxury of a Kamper Kabin which is a small log cabin with a wonderful AC. It was nice to be watching the rainfall from the dryness of my little porch for a change. Tomorrow, Mt Vernon, and, Harpers Ferry.



Mt. Vernon

## 6/7/2010 Fredericksburg, VA to Cunningham Falls State Park, MD - 190 Miles

I woke up ready to get the day started at 0600, made breakfast and hit the road. I anticipated that there would be a lot of traffic today getting to Mt Vernon and Fairfax County delivered. The experience served to remind me how nice it is to live in Chico; I reckon that I will be a bit more patient during the Chico mini traffic jams. I finally made it to Mt. Vernon and instead of being compact like Jefferson's estate; Washington's farm is really spread out. Millions of people annually tour Mt. Vernon and the tour line was pretty long even though I got there early. It took about ½ an hour to get to the

inside of the house and the long line of humanity wound its way through both the lower and upper stories. Mt. Vernon is nice, but much simpler than Jefferson's home. On the tour we were able to see the bed and bedroom where President Washington died along with the chair he used while serving as the President. I think the home reflected that his heart was really in farming; he saw a great future in America's farms and expected that their production could provide for the world. After the house tour, I went down the path and saw where George is laid to rest. I walked further to the shore of the Potomac River, enjoying the view. I visited the museum where I took a look at George's false teeth, they were not wooden as rumored.



Harpers Ferry, WV

Next I rode to the NRA National Firearms Museum which was about 20 miles to the north. This is an amazing collection numbering more than 2,000, firearms from the earliest to the most modern. Some of the more interesting weapons included the rifle used by the Rifleman, Lucas McCain, Dirty Harry's 44 mag and guns that once belonged to President Teddy Roosevelt. It didn't take much time before my head was spinning, looking at so many guns. After that, I headed to Harpers Ferry. As you might recall, in 1859, just a few years before the Civil War, Preacher John Brown, a man who sincerely hated slavery, stormed the armory at Harpers Ferry with his army of liberation, 21 person strong. He wanted to

take control of the cache of 100,000 weapons and encourage an uprising that would abolish slavery. He and his band eventually took refuge from the defending forces in the firehouse building still standing today. Long story short, they held their own for 36 hours until the Marines stormed the building, putting an end to the standoff. Brought to trial, Brown was convicted of treason and hung on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1859. While his raid was a failure, Brown managed to turn up the heat on the whole issue of slavery and in a way, this was the first battle in the Civil War. Harpers Ferry is a neat little town with lots of old buildings and a whole lot of history. With my exploring done, I rode about 40 miles to the Cunningham Falls State Park, not far from Gettysburg, MD, where I have a nice site. I might add the weather was wonderful today, a little cool and tonight, I expect it to be a snugly night.



Gettysburg, MD, Near the "high water mark" The furthest North the Confederated were able to go.

It was a little nippy when I woke up this morning, today would be the best temperature for riding yet, blue skies and white scattered puffy clouds. The traffic nightmare of the Fairfax area is just a bad memory as there is plenty of highway to share as I rode toward Gettysburg, PA. It was my kind of scenery also this morning, with rolling hills and lots of farms, along with the patchwork of fields of various colors. It was a short ride to my first stop, the Battlefield of Gettysburg. I chose to forgo the visitor's center and instead I opted to park near the place where the awful conflict reached its peak. The place is called the "High Water Mark." This is as far as the Confederate Army would push north; it was all downhill from there in a series of retreating battles. The carnage was ghastly as the Union forces fired their cannons into masses of soldiers only 30 ft away. General Longstreet had thrust forward with 12,000 men and half of them were either killed or captured. The battlefield is vast with monuments marking the different regiment's locations during the battle. Nearby, a hillside was festooned with the simple markers crowning where each hero lies. It is all too sad. War is both hell and insanity, one would think that civilized man would have gotten over campaigns of killing, but alas, the heart of man is the problem in the eternal struggle for control and power.



Before long, it was time to head out to Harrodsburg, the capitol of PA. The town sits on the bank of a big river and I was afforded a wonderful view of the Capitol buildings while on the bridge leading into town. My reason for coming here was to see the National Fire Museum. The museum is housed in one of the old 3 story brick firehouses that once serviced the area. Everything about the museum is spick and span, the ceiling of the apparatus room was all paneled in wood and it was beautiful. They had 3 examples of hand pumped engines dating back to the late 1700's, and 2 coal fired engines, who's operation were extremely complicated. The station once housed apparatus pulled by horses and my guide, Ernie, a current volunteer firefighter, said that the horses were trained

so when the bell would sound, the horses would move from their stalls and automatically take their positions under the quick harness's so they could be hooked up, it all happened quickly. Upstairs, they had a complete Gamewell alarm headquarters and several really old parade hats worn by the volunteers.

Some of these leather hats were pretty simple, but some were really painted into works of art. Ernie said he had heard that one hat like some of those in the museum's collection, recently sold for 26k.

Well, it was great spending time looking at all the historical fire stuff, but I had another stop before finding my camp for the night. This stop was the Mennonite Visitors Center in Lancaster, PA. Along with learning a little more about the Mennonites and Amish, another reason I stopped here is because they have a full scale model of the Tabernacle from the Bible. After paying a small entry fee, me and a few others, were given a tour of the Tabernacle with explanations of the different furnishings. It was all nicely done and they even had a mannequin of the High Priest who did a bit of a stroll and a turn for us. Well, their visitor's center is kind of a mission field for them. From what I could gather, they believe pretty much the same as I do, except that they are pacifists. I have some reading material I collected from them that should explain why, when I get some time to read. My camp for the night is a KOA about 30 miles SE of Lancaster and it is pretty nice. The lady behind the desk was very helpful in giving me some ideas on how to see Philadelphia tomorrow. There is a lot to see there and it should be fun.

### 6/9/2010 Philadelphia, PA – 10 Local Miles



The nice restaurant I found

Although rain was predicted for this morning, I woke to dry, yet threatening skies. I was dreading trying to drive into Phili with all of its traffic and as it turned out, I didn't have to. This is because, 5 miles from here, is a train stop named Thornburg, the last stop of the line actually. On it, I could get all the way into town which take a bit over an hour. Along the way I admired the old buildings that were seen everywhere and noticed that the railroad right of ways were trashed out and basically, very unkempt, downed limbs and overgrown bushes everywhere. It sure seems like there would be a sizable army of able-bodied people on the dole, that could help them improve the eyesore, but I guess not. I disembarked about 6 blocks from the Mutter Museum, first stop but first things first, I needed some breakfast. There was a lot of eat and run food shops around, but no sit and eat places, and that is what I wanted. I finally asked a local and she directed me to an area where there was a 24 hour diner. The diner was very nice with neat chandlers and granite table tops along with good coffee and corned beef omelets.

The Mutter Museum is a collection of medical oddities; would you like to see several skulls with bullets imbedded in them? How about a Colon that was 4 feet long and carrying 40 pounds of "waste" after the victim died of chronic constipation? Or, perhaps the shrunken head collection is more to your liking, or skulls where the bone has eroded away due to Syphilis. If this is how you roll, then the Mutter, is for you. I couldn't help but feel sorry for the suffering of those poor folks who endured these awful diseases. The whole experienced sort of made my skin crawl and specking of skin, yep, they had examples of tanned human skin, and even some old medical books that were bounded by covers of human skin.



The Liberty Bell

Next, I proved to myself that I am not the Christopher Columbus type when it comes to navigation and here is how it happened, this time. I was heading east on Market Street and about ½ way through town, the giant Gothic building of City Hall, sits smack dab in the middle of Market street. Incidentally, the steps at the Hall I think, are the ones Rocky, ran up. But anyway, I was still several blocks from the City Hall and I kept seeing signs that said to take the trolley, go downstairs. So downstairs I went and I boarded the trolley and ask the driver for a all day pass, she said I would need to go to the Transit District's main office to get a pass, but instead of shooin me out the door, she let me stay on and told me when to get off a couple of stops away. Her instructions seemed clear to her but not to me, and their route map on the station wall may as well have been written in Hieroglyphics for all the good it did for me to study it. I decided to go topside and get my bearings, now mind you, there is no sun today. I surfaced on Market Street, and saw that the City Hall was now only a block away so I was at least a bit closer to Independence Square, or, so I thought. So there I am studying the tiny images on my map and nothing is making sense. I saddled up to a black lady that was walking along slowly, and admitted that I was confused and asked her to verify that I was heading in the right direction. She said no, Independence Square is the other way. First, denial set in, she just didn't know the right way, and I did. Then the realization hit me painfully, as it usually does, I was the one that was wrong, 180 degrees worth of wrong. How could have this happened? The short ride on the underground trolley had actually taken me under the City Hall and a block beyond. To the untrained eye like mine, City Hall is City Hall, no matter how you approach it.



A "ducky" ride

Oh well, now pointed in the right direction, I made it to the Visitors Center and secured tickets to the Independence Square tour at 1615. As in many cities, WWII Ducks are used to ferry tourists around and that is what I did which was fun. Out of about 50 seats, 40 were taken by 5<sup>th</sup> graders but they were a lot of fun especially during the playing of YMCA and after we had left water, the song "On the road again" by Willie Nelson was played, and the kids all sung along seemingly knowing the words. Our driver said that was a first for him to have the kids sing along to Willie's song. Afterward, I found a recommended Phili Cheese steak place, and had one; I can't say that there was anything remarkable about it although it was good. After that, I did some walking and saw Christ's

Church and Ben Franklin's grave, then the Liberty Bell and finally, the tour of Independence Hall which was interesting and very historical. By now the rain had seriously settled in and I figured it was time to head back to the KOA, and I didn't want to complicate a wet (5mile) ride, by making it a wet and dark ride. The ride back to camp was thankfully, uneventful. I really enjoyed Philadelphia today, the helpful people, the history, and the architecture of the old buildings. Yes, there are a lot of glass skyscrapers in the downtown area and they are impressive but they certainly lack the class of the older stone or brick buildings.

## 6/10/2010 Philadelphia, PA – to – East Lyme, CT – 260 (hard) Miles

According to the original plan, I was going to visit my friend, John, who lives on long island but a complication came up, his father died a few days ago and the funeral is today, not a good time to entertain company, so I bypassed NYC. My first stop yesterday was a disappointment, the National Helicopter Museum. I suppose I have been spoiled with all the exceptional museums I have seen on this trip so far, but this place landed short. The collection was not really extensive and .... What they had was well displayed but, there were no volunteers on the museum floor at all that usually point out interesting items oftentimes missed. So, I wandered around and did see a couple of interesting things I had not seen before, like a helicopter that used compressed air to shoot out the tips of the blades to make them turn, and some good cross sections of rotor blades. They also had an old retired Osprey there. Oh well, that is how the rotor turns.

I continued my ride and was challenged by very heavy traffic and rough roads especially over the Hudson and Harlem Rivers where I caught a very quick view of NYC on my right. Near Millford CT, A huge drenching thunderstorm moved in and I took refuge in the center lane at a Shell Station/Convenience Store. The owners were Chinese Christians and made me feel at home by getting me a chair and we had a pleasant and interesting conversation while the rain poured down. After letting the roads drain a bit, I headed out again and ended up at a lake campground at East Lyme, \$40.00 a night with no shower, it seems to be the going rate around here. About 20 minutes after my tent was set up, rain moved in but I found it was a good time to take a little nap. When I woke up, it was dry and I made a little simple supper and read and called it a night.

## 6/11/2010 East Lyme, CT – to – Wells State Park, MA - 117Miles



Mark Twain's Home in Hartford, CT

Things were dry this morning and so I packed up and headed to McD where I could get some coffee and use the internet to plan my attack on Boston. I was going for a ride on a steam train nearby, but on the webpage I had printed out, I noticed that the train only operates on the weekends so, that idea is out. Soon though, I was heading to Hartford CT, the Capitol of CT, to see the home of Samuel Clemens. I had learned quite a lot about Clemens, commonly known as Mark Twain from watching an HBO series on him on Netflix and the man, and his home intrigued me. The home is made of brick but very ornate with lots of balconies and gables. I found the interior

of the house to be ornate as well with stenciled walls and ceilings and lots of decorative woodwork all over the ceilings and walls. The house was very dark inside with dark wood and wall finishes, but, a work of art nevertheless. This was Clemens home before he was famous in fact; on the third story was his billiard and writing room, where he penned many of his classics. Clemens had 2 daughters and one son that died at a very early age of Diphtheria. None of Clemens' heirs survive today. One good example of Clemens' storytelling ability was that on mantle were about 5 items and on each side of the mantle were 2 pictures, the one on the right was a cat and the one on the left was a little girl. Each evening, just before bedtime, Clemens would regularly tell a story to his children. It had to start with the cat, then involve all of the 5 items on the mantle, from right to left, and end with the little girl. The story couldn't be repeated and to make sure, the children would regularly re-arrange the items on the mantle. It seems to me to be a clever idea. The tour was not rushed and only a group of about a dozen people, so we always had time to look and ask questions.

Next, I rode to Wal-Mart to stock up on food and then to Wells State Park where I will be saying the next two days. Clouds are moving in and there is a 60 percent chance of rain in ole Beantown tomorrow. I am riding about 20 miles to Worcester to catch the train into town. It should be fun and interesting.

### 6/12/2010, Wells State Park, MA – 44 Local Miles



The Old North Church

Although rain was in the forecast, the day started out dry and by 0730, I was on the road heading to the train station at Worcester, Mass. Go ahead and try to pronounce it! Give up, it's Wooster. I think they do this sort of cockamamie thing just so they can laugh at the "out of town, ers." The train ride was a bit more than an hour and I noticed that the station labeling and railroad right of ways, put Phil to shame. I caught the subway to the Haymarket stop, and started walking. Soon I was on the famous Boston, follow the brick line, and I intercepted it near the old historical section of town with the narrow streets and wonderful Colonial brick buildings. As I

started my journey afoot, I kept seeing people walking in the opposite direction to me, with little boxes tied with string, what captivated me about the boxes was the label on them that said, "Mike's Bakery." Being a person that would make a fool of himself for some baked goods with Java, I was on the lookout. I soon found the busy bakery and ordered a Chocolate Canole' and some other pastry thing that looked like something lemon. I took my treasure box and headed to the North Church and near the bronze statue of Paul Revere, I found a place to sit and enjoy my sweet find. The canole' was simple, yet good. As for the other layered treat, I couldn't quite figure out what it was. It had mild taste reminiscent of the way model airplane glue smells and when I would take a bite, one layer kind of released its water like flavor, whatever it was. It may have been some kind of cheese in that layer, I don't know. While not unpleasant, there is nothing about it that would make me want to have it again.



Ole Ironsides

I checked out the Old North Church, where the lanterns were put in the bell tower to signal that the British were coming. Then I checked out Paul Revere's house then on to a very old cemetery where there were people reposed, that were born in the 1600's. I kept following the line over the harbor bridge as a light rain began to fall. Soon, I was in line to see "Ole Ironsides," the oldest (still in service) commissioned, U.S. Navy warship in the world. I enjoyed the tour and we visited the gun decks and the lower deck where the crew of 450, or so, sailors slept and listened to the story of the battle where the ship got her unofficial "iron sides" name. After that, the rain which had been heavy; lightened up and I walked to the Quincy Market which was filled with shops and lots of

weekend people. Even the transvestites were out in force, doing whatever they do. One building contained a long a line of walk-up restaurants. I patrolled the food line back and forth and all of it looked good, yet none of it looked good. I settled on a piece of pizza and that ended up being supper. After that, I walked to the old Statehouse and site of the "Boston Massacre."

Well, I needed to catch the 4:36 train back to Wooster, so I found the nearest subway station which was right below the Statehouse, and caught the Orange line back to the Back Bay Station. The train was late and there was a bit of confusion whether or not the train, was the right one, but it was. Soon I was heading back to Wooster having a pleasant conversation with a lady from Maine who was my seatmate. She, the lady, live on a 70 acre farm but both her and her husband were getting tired of the winters and all the mowing they have to do during the summer. Soon, I was at my stop and relieved to find my bike still intact in the parking structure. Since the rain was coming down again, I suited up for the wet ride back to camp. When I arrived, darkness was just falling like the rain, I got in my tent and was glad to see that things were dry and I was in for the night.

It was raining hard enough that I didn't want to open the trailer lid to get something to eat. I was tired from all the walking and didn't have any problem sleeping after reading a bit.

### **6/13/2010 East Lyme, CT – to – Camden Hills State Park, Maine – 283 Miles**

It rained all night but by 0800, it quit. I was thankful for that since I didn't have any plan if the rain would have kept coming down. I got on the road and stopped at McD's for breakfast, and spent a bit of time to map out a route. I normally like the 2 lane roads and for a while, that is what I rode until I basically gave up, and relented to the Interstate's as directed by my GPS. There are just so many little roads here, it was a nightmare, trying to connect them to make a credible route. There was a little bit of nuisance rain this morning near Wooster, but soon it is just a drizzle. While on the 2 lane roads, I went through several small towns and really enjoy looking at the Colonial homes which are the dominate style. I eventually worked my way over to Portsmouth and as I passed the town, I had a nice view from the bridge, very picturesque with its brick buildings and church steeples. It looked like a neat town to explore, but not today. My camp for the night is Camden Hills State Park near Rockland, which had a great looking downtown area of old brick buildings. It is overcast, but dry and I hope it stays that way tonight.

### **6/14/2010 - Camden Hills State Park, Maine to Amherst, NS – 419 Miles**



**Belfast Maine, great old buildings**

I woke up to good weather for riding and soon was on my way. My first stop was for breakfast at a café in the town of Belfast Maine. Belfast is a harbor town and has an abundance of wonderful brick storefronts in the downtown section. Breakfast was better than usual and to the north I rode, going through occasional small towns and the ever present forest. About 5 miles from the Canadian border, I found a place to cache, my little handgun since handguns in Canada are verboten. I was careful to record the Lat/Long and landmarks in the area to make sure I can find it again. Soon I was at the border and seemingly, the only one interested in going into New Brunswick. I had an easy entry into Canada and at first, the roadway was divided and new. I saw sign that said that St.

John was 127 (I thought miles) ahead, and was a bit shocked until it dawned on me that the figure was in kilometers instead of miles. In St. John's I stopped at a bank and exchanged some money for the money of the realm and was surprised that the exchange rate was nearly equal however, the Canadian Dollar was worth 4 cents more than the greenback.



My campsite in Amherst

Soon I was heading toward Nova Scotia, land of the highest tides in the world. Incidentally, when I checked the tide tables for the following day, the tidal difference was going to be 43 feet. As I headed NE, rain became my new riding companion and for a while, it was really wet. After riding about ½ an hour, the rain slacked off to just a light rain, for the next couple of hours. The temperature was pretty cold and I was glad I had my heated vest on which helped me a lot. This part of the world is very green with forested hills and farms with checkered fields. The whole area is definitely rural in nature with widely separated villages. After a bit more than 400 miles, I crossed the line into Nova Scotia and saw a sign that there was camping at the next off ramp.

Leaving the freeway, I turned left as the sign said and rode about 5 miles without seeing anywhere to camp. The road made some turns and dead ended into someone's driveway. Since I was already committed to the driveway, I kept going into the farm area next to the house so I could turn around when the owner appeared at his door. I apologized for disturbing him and told him of my plight. He said about the campground I was looking for, "you wouldn't want to camp there." He went on to explain that the owner of the place is pretty "laid back," about their business and he recommended that I proceed another 10 miles to another campground. On the way back to the main highway, I looked hard for the "laid back" place but never saw it. The recommended campground was a nice one with very clean restrooms or as they call them up here, "washrooms."

#### 6/15/2010 Amherst, NS to Hall's Harbour, NS – 180 Miles



One of the Bay of Fundy's back waters

One thing I noticed way up north here is that the sun, or rather, daylight comes really early. This morning it was 0400 that the sky was getting brighter. After doing all my chores, I had the sneaking suspicion that my watch was not right so I ask some other campers and found out that I was an hour behind, so, it was later than I thought. I headed toward Truro and as soon as I could, I found some back roads to ride on that would take me close to the Bay of Fundy. I went through the small town of Maitland and saw a place where I could see one of the fingers of the bay and it happened to be a place where adventuresome people can "Ride the Bore." When the incoming tide charges back into the fingers of the bay, there is

oftentimes a visible wave and that is what they call the "bore." As I looked out over the giant mud flat, I saw that there were a couple of rubber rafts sitting out in the channel waiting for what I assumed was the bore. As I watch, sure enough there was a bit of a wave and in talking to some people, there was a good place to watch the bore about 10 miles back the way I came so I rode there. Sure enough, there was a place for people to watch the now narrow channel, perched on top of an abandoned railroad station. As I took my place among the small throng assembled, I had a pleasant conversation with a couple of local bikers.



The Tidal Bore arrives

They confirmed that the winters were brutal but not as bad as places remote from the ocean which tended to moderate the chilly conditions. After about 30 minutes, the bore arrived and it was anti-climatic however, the rush of water behind it was a crowd pleaser with the giant surge, there were whirlpools and large flat sandy areas that were quickly covered. When the show was over, I was heading back to the parking area when I heard and saw a huge splash. Some misguided person had jumped off the highway bridge into the surging water which resembled chocolate milk. At first he was yelling something but him being probably 200 yds away, couldn't hear what he was saying. We noticed he was wearing a wetsuit which gave me the impression that it was

more of a prank than a suicide attempt. While others went to get help, we watched as the person was slowly swept into the small tributary by which he had jumped, he didn't seem to be moving much. Soon he was out of sight and there was a marsh which blocked us from hiking over to the channel. Not situated to do anything but be a bystander and feeling that his 50 or 60 ft jump was a prank, I continued my ride. Later on the news, nothing was said about someone jumping to his death so, I don't know.



The tide is out at Hall's Harbour

I continued toward Hall's Harbour which is famous for the photos of the boats sitting on the ground when the tide is out and I took a lot of back roads along my way. The secondary roads are awful because of the frost heaves and potholes, a couple of bridge approaches was especially bad, like hitting a curb or at least 1/2 high a curb, a definite jolt to my spine. Hall's Harbor was very small and when I arrived, I took a photo of the boats floating and went to the little restaurant nearby for dinner. There ordering process was a bit strange, to order your food, you went into the gift shop where you ordered your dinner and then you were given a number for your table. I placed my order then went to find a place to sit. My pan fried fish was pretty good but the Coconut Cream Pie was really

great. I asked the waitress, Carrie, a fiftyish, ordinary looking woman if there was a place to camp somewhere close by and she said not really. After a while, while bringing my coffee, she said that she didn't want to seem forward but it would be ok with her if I camped at her mom's house, she said they had a large lawn and they would be pleased to have me.

I spent some time after dinner exploring the seashore and taking photos of the boats, now resting neatly on the bottom before heading to "her mom's place." I found the house and there was a large lawn and a nice place to pitch my tent. After shutting off the motor, the owner, Connie, said that her daughter had called and said I was coming. I introduced myself and went to work putting up my tent. With camp set up, and me on my bed, aiming for a nap, I heard my name being called and Connie ask me if I wanted to come in and take a shower, which I could not decline. Just before entering the home, Connie said she would introduce me to her mom; Beth was 94 and full of vim and vigor.



Carrie and her Mom, Beth

She said she would introduced me as “Carrie’s Friend,” so her mom would not be frightened. Beth had a mild case of dementia but except for a few slips, like looking for a long dead cat, she did pretty good and got around remarkably well. After the shower, I settled in to a chair in the living area and practiced the long lost art of conversation. One of the funny things about their language here is the use of “A.” They use “A,” instead of “huh.” “A” can also be used as an affirmation such as: The weather has sure turned cold today,” “A.” At about 2130, Carrie came home looking haggard because of the long hours. I knew she wanted to talk to me as she said earlier, so I excused myself and joined her (Carrie) on the front porch

and we had a good conversation about Biblical topics. Soon, off to my home sweet tent I went and slept well although the wind really blew all night.

### **6/16/2010 - Hall’s Harbor, NS to Saint John’s N.B. 180 Miles**

The day dawned sunny and windy, Connie made me eggs and toast for breakfast and while she had wanted me to stay another day and do some more exploring, I felt the need to move along so after breakfast, I left. I took local roads which were rough but interesting and before long, nature was calling and the call could not be ignored. I looked around one small town for a place with no luck and so I continued long. Before long, I passed a church and out in front, were several motorized bicycles and there was the Pastor, Pastor Steven out in front of his church working on a bike. I stopped and gave him my card which has one of the motor bikes I built on it and we talked motorbikes for a short while before I asked him if I could “GO.” He said sure and that call completed, we talked about his flourishing ministry for a while. He touched on some of the highlights of his life and he had quite a life indeed. Despite Steven wanting me to stay for a few days and explore the area, I headed toward Digby to catch the ferry back to St. John, in New Brunswick. The ferry cost took my breath away, 105 dollars. Well, still better than back-tracking my same route. As I was waiting to board the ferry, one of the motorcyclist exiting the ferry found a slick spot and flopped down, nothing injured but pride and a couple of memory scratches on the bike. Nobody in the biking world laughs too much, cuz most have been there, done that. Well, about 2 ½ hours left before we dock, I don’t know quite where I will end up tonight, perhaps back in the USA. Perhaps not! I made it to within 30 miles of the border and since darkness was closing in, I found a camp and called it a night.

P.S. Some funny signs I have seen in the last few days:

In N.S. there is the town of PUGWASH

A caution sign on a country road read - HEARING IMPAIRED CHILD

On the way into Bangor, PETE'S PRETTY GOOD ICE CREAM

## 6/17/2010 - St. John's N.B. to Conway, NH 301 Miles

Although it rained during the night by morning time the steady rain, had turned to showers so I did what I could to get ready for breaking the camp while inside the tent. When the next lull occurred, I sprang into action. Fortunately, nearby was a building that enabled me to take my tent and other items inside where I dried everything as well as possible with my thirsty, micro-fiber towel. Soon I was heading out riding in off and on showers for the next 3 hours. When I approached the USA border, I was amazed at all the wiz-bang, high-tech scanners and cameras that formed a gauntlet for those entering the USA. One was even a camera which flashed, taking a photo as you proceeded to the customs office. The officer was nice and as he handed me my passport, he gave me a gift by saying "welcome home," which made me feel both proud to be an American, and, a little weepy. It rained all the way to Bangor Maine but as I left that city, it started clearing up and soon I was shedding layers to keep comfortable with the rising temperature.

Not long after Bangor, I left the Interstate and the next 150 miles were simply beautiful, as the back roads took me past many lakes and interesting small towns. Except for some areas of "frost heaves," most of the roadway was smooth and occasionally, I would ride into an area where the air smelled sweet, something I had not experienced before. It was not possible to determine what exactly was causing the sweetness, but it was wonderful nonetheless. This was the kind of day that one thanks the Good Lord for the sport of motorcycling and the ability to participate in it. I stopped at a Dunkin Doughnuts, for coffee (and a doughnut) and had a nice conversation with a fellow motorcyclist that rides more than me. He was 74 years old and very fit and able. Speaking of Dunkin Doughnuts, these places are everywhere, more numerous than McD's, sometimes, I have to avert my eyes when I see one.

I arrived in Conway and found that it is "bike week" in this valley with lots of motorcycles everywhere. My reason for being in this area of Vermont is to ride the steam cog railway up to Mt. Washington, which will be on Saturday. Up until recently, Mt. Washington has been known for being the place with the highest recorded wind speed, anywhere. Recently though, there was a contender that had arisen to take the prize. I will probably get more details on Saturday. Tomorrow will be a free day so I have time to do some shopping and re-arranging my gear. I am thinking of sending a box of stuff home to open a bit more room for example, a bike cover is a wonderful thing except when it is all wet. I find it a better plan to just cover the top of the bike with a lightweight aluminized tarp, which is easy to dry off if it is wet. It feels good knowing that tomorrow; I will have a real relaxing morning without the need to put a lot of miles behind me.

## 6/18/2010 - Conway, NH to Dry River Campground - 54 Local Miles



My camp at the Dry River Campground

Today was a slack day and I took advantage of my leisure time by catching up on emails, etc. I left camp around noon and decided to head up to where the Cog Railway was so I could take some pictures and have plenty of time to visit the museum. The railway is historical in that it was envisioned before the Civil war, and up and running by 1869. What was the purpose of building a railroad where sections reach 31 degrees? Just because they could, Mt. Washington is the highest real estate in the eastern part of the country and affords those who ascend, a remarkable view.

There is just no way in this day and age of environmental impact reports; that something like this could be built. True, Mount Washington is marred by a gash of a line going up what seems to be an impossible slope but I see it as a visible display of engineering genius. So the workers could get back to headquarters at the bottom of the hill in reasonable time, a kind of skate board that straddled the cog-way in the center of the track. Normally, the time for workers to descend was about 10 minutes but one intrepid teenage worker made the decent in the time of 2 minutes, 45 seconds, unbelievable!

After that, I rode about 20 minutes to the Dry River Campground, my campsite for the night and settled in for the night.

### 6/19/2010 – Dry River Campground to Graniteville, VT 119 Miles



The little train that does

Today I got up to clear skies and broke camp and rode about 12 miles to the Mount Washington Cog Railway Station. The departure time was 0900 and at the stroke of the hour, we (me and 50 other intrepid explorers) started moving up the incline. The ride to the top would take about an hour as the little engine that could, chugged away pushing us up the incredibly steep track which in one place reached 37 degrees. The engine was quieter than I expected from riding on other steamers. Our Conductor said the fireman would shovel a ton of coal into the beast to take us aloft. Steady along and up we went at times no faster than a fast walk. Like advertized, in an hour we arrived at the summit. Along with our arrival, there was a running event where athletes were running up the 8

miles of road. Some of them arrived shortly after we did and it only took them 1 hour and 12 minutes. I must say that the runners I saw were very fit and not an oz of extra weight on them. I had some coffee and took a look at the museum and one interesting item was a list was all the people that had expired on Mt Washington and the area around it. There were about 141 of them since about the 1880's. It had their names and date of death and a shout description of what led to their demise, a bit morbid but interesting none the less. There were quite a few that died from falls and hypothermia because the weather can turn nasty here, quickly. I noted at least one motorcyclist that had left the roadway and hit a tree, ouch!

We were told that our time on top would be about 45 minutes but an hour came and went and we were informed that one of the new diesel engines had stalled out on the track and they were stuck, some kind of computer problem. After about 2 hours, we were told to load up as a plan was in place to get us down. Our little steam engine was driven until it almost touched the stricken one and we got out and hiked down to another waiting engine, parked below it. It was lucky for us that the stalled engine happened on part of the track where this was possible because so much of the rail is elevated. One thing I found interesting is that the passenger coach is not attached to the engine, so on the way down; our conductor became a brakeman, applying just enough brake to slow our coach, slowing it, without shoving the little train down the track, pretty strange. I had some nice conversations with some of the riders and enjoyed both the ride and the view from the highest mountain in the eastern US.



The school in the town were the movie Betelgeuse was filmed.



Ben and Jerry's Headquarters



The Inn, featured in the TV series Newhart

Next, I rode to East Corinth, VT, where the movie, Betelgeuse, was filmed. Some of the highlights included seeing the school building in the opening scenes, the place where the covered bridge was, the hill where the house stood, and the actual covered bridge which now shelters a snow cat at the local ski area. I stopped and talked to Neil who was pretty old and had lived in the town all his life. Neil shared stories about when the film crew was in town and other more historical aspects about the town like when a hurricane hit the area in the 30's, killing 700. All in all, I probably spent a half an hour talking to Neil and enjoyed our visit. Next, I rode to Graniteville where there is a really big Granite quarry that I hope to tour tomorrow. Almost next door to the quarry was a camping place so I was set for the night. The owner said maybe some rain tomorrow so, I will see what happens.

### 6/20/2010 – Graniteville, VT to Herkimer, NY 258 Miles

I had planned to take a tour of the Rock of Ages Granite Quarry this morning, but unlike what their brochure said, there are no tours on Sundays. So, I headed to Waterbury, VT, home of the Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Factory. I was the first to arrive at the factory but soon, many other ice cream lovers arrived, to take the tour. Our tour guide was funny and used a lot of puns during the walk around tour. I guess I would sum it up as a moooving experience and yes, we got a sample although, I like my ice cream to be pretty icy and not so creamy as Ben and Jerry's tends to be. As I was leaving Ben and Jerry's, I came upon a woman who was walking her Pug Dog and of course I had to detain her so I could talk to her about her Pug and play with it.

From there, I rode to East Middlebury, VT where the actual historical Waterbury Inn was. So what, you say. This is the inn used in the TV series, Newhart, the television situation comedy starring comedian Bob Newhart and actress Mary Frann as an author and his wife who owned and operated a historic inn

located in a small, rural Vermont town that was populated by eccentric characters. The show aired from 1982 to 1990. The inn was just one of the trivial, but fun stops on my reality tour.

Next, I took a cable ferry across Lake Champlain and toured Fort Ticonderoga which according to Wikikipedia: *Fort Ticonderoga, formerly Fort Carillon, is a large 18th-century fort built at a narrows near the south end of Lake Champlain in upstate New York in the United States.*



Fort Ticonderoga

*It was constructed by the French between 1754 and 1757 during the Seven Years' War, often referred to as the French and Indian War in the USA, and was of strategic importance during the 18th-century colonial conflicts between Great Britain and France, and again to a lesser extent during the American Revolutionary War. Notable visitors to the fort included, George Washington, Ben Franklin and Benedict Arnold. There was quite a nice collection of artifacts on display at the museum and the fort had been restored with many cannon and mortars in position. After the fort, I rode along*

Lake Champlain for many miles and saw some really nice country and pastoral vistas. My accommodations for this evening is the KOA campground, about 7 miles north of Herkimer, NY, and just across the street from the famous Herkimer Diamond Mine. This KOA won the KOA campground of the year for 2010. It is really a nice place with a roaring river that borders the campground, just behind my campsite.

### **6/21/2010 – Herkimer, NY to Farmington, NY 198 Miles**



The lock at Little Falls, NY

Today I planned on going for a little boat cruise on the Erie Canal and since the departure time was 1300 hrs, I had some time to kill that I put to good use, by doing my laundry. After that, I headed to the boat terminal and bought a ticket and noting that I had 3 hours still to kill, I read some brochures about the local history that the nice lady in the gift shop gave me. There were some major battles near here in the Revolutionary War but, what really caught my attention, was that the highest lift lock on the canal and at the time of construction, the highest in the world was just 7 miles away in the town of Little Falls. Within a few heartbeats time, I was on my way and found the canal and parked my bike at a visitor's area and hiked to the lock which was maybe 2/3 mile away.



A "Looper" boat

At one time, the Erie was swollen with barge traffic so bad, the crews would break into fistfights to "cut" ahead in the line of barges waiting their turns in the lock. Nowadays, with the advent of highways and trucks, a barge on the Erie is rarely seen. The majority of traffic is recreational, and a permit for getting through all 31 of the locks on the system has to be one of the last major bargains, at \$100.00 for a yacht sized boat, and less for smaller boats which really defies logic; since they have to do the same amount of work for a huge barge, or a canoe.



So cozy inside

Many people live on their boats, moving with the seasons. Here is a mind blowing fact: a person can travel from the Great Lakes and beyond, to Key west, by only traveling about 35 miles in the open sea, all the rest can be done through canals and inland waterways. Those hearty and “well heeled” people that make the 5,000 mile loop in the system, fly a special flag, proudly proclaiming that they are “Loopers.”

While I was walking along the canal, sure enough, some pleasure boats were passing heading to the Lakes. One of them was a 40 ft boat which looked like it was built for this sort of thing, there were vegetables growing on the back deck and house plants and flowers in the cabin, so very cozy. I got to the deep

lock which lifts the boats 40.5 ft, and it was empty with the lower doors being opened so I was able to look at the gigantic works and counter-weights, to see how they operated. Soon a group of two boats arrived, and I had time to watch the entire process of boat lifting. The man tending the lock was responsible for everything connected with the day to day operation of the lock, from operating the controls, to mowing the lawns and painting. Truly, a lock-tender’s job is more like a lifestyle and the Lock 17 tender was very helpful with information about “his Lock.”

Soon, it was time to walk back to the bike and I stopped to look at an old 3 story brick building across the street from the canal in the front, and the Mohawk river behind that was undergoing renovation. It was a shell with no floors, just a roof and 4 walls. The one time tavern was being turned into a private residence and there was a similar building next door had already been converted. What a great place it will be when completed. From the top floor, the owners will be able to see the Yachts cruising by. The contractor that is doing the project, spent about 20 minutes with me telling me about the project and some of the local history of Little Falls, which was once a hub of manufacturing but had seen better days.

Well, I had to get on with the cruise which took us through one of the locks that still operated with the same DC electrical system it was built with, the lock made its own DC power on-site and everything was neat and tidy and our 20 ft lift went smoothly. Our guide was a real canal enthusiast, and so our tour was full of information, most of it interesting. After the boat ride, I was distracted by trying to find the freeway when I noticed some police ahead of me on the road. I thought there had been an accident but no, it’s a “safety stop” and tag, I was it. Along with my license and registration, I was asked where I was coming from, where I was heading, and although he was nice about it, I resented the intrusion by an authority about “my business but kept it causal thinking it was partly to determine my sobriety.” The officer asked to inspect my eyewear; which are safety glasses. He said he would not ticket me today but I was not wearing approved glasses. All this intrusion while wearing my CMA jacket, Heaven only knows what would have happened if I would have been wearing some other “colors.”

Next, I visited the old Fort Herkimer Church, built in 1740, which featured several gun ports in the walls, and a swivel cannon in the belfry. Nothing of the fort is left but the church is still standing, surrounded by a graveyard. Normally the church is closed and special arrangements for seeing the inside are necessary, but today, some workman are doing some repairs so I got to look inside. Next I stopped at Palmyra, NY to see the only surviving canal “change bridge,” and the oldest cast and wrought-iron vehicular bridge in New York State, and possibly the United States. The bridge was built in 1858 so that the mule(s) could change, from pulling on one side of the canal, to the other. The bridge was both simple and elegant, an amazing piece of old engineering.



The Old Herkemer Church

Well, like this journal entry, it had been a long day and the Farmington KOA was my camp for the night. I started a conversation with an older couple, (70 something's) that camped nearby, and, I thought they would never leave. In about the hour's time, they spent with me, between them, they smoked 9 cigarettes, I counted the butts in the campfire ring. To show you how tired I was, when I got up this morning, I found I had left my trailer top completely open, sure glad it didn't rain or the local critters weren't on the job. I think I will double check it tonight.

### 6/22/2010 – Farmington, NY to Marshburg, PA 223 Miles

It is nice and dry this morning and soon I am heading out toward Batavia, NY, through occasional showers and I have decided that I need some new tires for the trailer. I found a Tractor Supply and when I was looking at the tires that would fit my trailer, I noticed that the ones that were already mounted on rims, were only ten bucks more. That's cheaper than I could have them mounted for, no doubt. I also purchased everything I needed to service the bearings. Thankfully, the rain was done for awhile so I took my project around behind their store, away from prying and helpful farmer eyes. When I pulled the first bearing out of the hub it looked pretty good, but when I removed the seal and looked at the rear bearing, not so good. The grease was the color of a chocolate milkshake, not the way it should look. The bearing and race once cleaned up, looked fine and it seemed to function normally, so I cleaned everything and repacked the bearings, a skill I learned from my dad. Now on to the other side where as soon as I removed the hub cover, I saw major water contamination and a close look at the rear bearing and race revealed some problems. The race was actually spinning and the bearing was not turning too freely. Fortunately, I carry an extra bearing and race and so I installed the extra, the whole job lasting probably an hour and 1/2.



Pretty much the way it was on the "Maid of the Mist" boat ride, wet, wild and wonderful.

Now I was heading out with restored confidence instead of my usual ignorance is bliss attitude toward Niagara Falls. The GPS took me right to the spot, so I found some parking for 5 dollars (the state park rate was 10) and got tickets to ride on the famous, Maid of the Mist. My first glimpse of the falls registered a bit of disappointment in that the falls didn't look as high as I expected. Oh well, soon I was among a throng of mostly youngsters on the small boat, them being clad in thin blue rainwear, sort of like the plastic bags one gets from the cleaners, and soon, we were off. First we cruised past American Falls and did not get too wet but soon that would be

remedied when we were bobbing amidst the whirlpools, so close to the Canadian Falls that we were all drenched. What the falls may lack in height, is made up by the sheer volume of water cascading down. What a view it was to see millions of gallons of water pouring down while we were as it seemed, way too close. Everyone was all smiles and the kids were all having a good time, I could tell by their screams. There was so much mist flying around that at times, we couldn't see nothing.

All too soon, we were heading back and once safely on shore, I hiked up a staircase which is close to the falls and again was blasted by rainfall, courtesy of the Niagara River. Back on top, I called and talked to Kathleen for about a half an hour. Why am I telling you this? Because the next time I turned on my phone, a text message was sent informing me that the phone company in Canada charges .79 cents per minute. That being the case, that might have been one expensive phone call. Next, I rode to a KOA park near Marshburg, PA, the cost for my tent site in the almost empty park, \$37.00, the KOA a couple of nights ago, the one that won the special "KOA of the year" award was \$19.00, oh, well, that's life.

### 6/22/2010 – Marshburg, PA to Kingston, OH 368 Miles

The morning came early because around 0400, a loud noise awakened me and looking out my window toward the garbage dumpsters, I was thinking that maybe a bear was foraging for food. I was relieved to see that instead of a Bear, it was the largest Raccoon I had ever seen on top of the dumpster. I watched as he opened the plastic lid and commenced to dumpster dive. I did fall back to sleep and woke up at a more reasonable time and made camp and headed to Titusville, PA, home of the first oil strike in the country. Along the way, it was surprising to see oil wells not in the flats, but in the hardwood covered hills. These were shallow wells which I could tell because of the small size of the pumping units.



The Drake Well

Titusville is a fairly bustling town, kept alive with many business still related to the oil industry, but, the town also had the appearance of a town in decline. I arrived at the Drake Well site, and Museum and saw a short video about the oil history of the area, then I proceeded outside to view the various displays and old buildings. On the grounds is a reconstruction of the first oil well, full scale, with an operating steam engine built from the original plans of the type actually used, and, the actual original (69 ft) well that Drake drilled, was tapped and oil was being pumped from it, into a barrel. This was really interesting seeing the various parts actually working and the end result. The oil going into the barrel, actually goes back in to the ground to be recycled. The attendant said that sometimes they have to import some oil into the well to keep it working. He says they use local oil, which is light oil, from a nearby well.



Still pumping oil out of the same original well

After taking photos of the well assembly, I walked the grounds to see what else was there. The next thing I saw was really interesting. A building with the largest "hit n miss" engine, I had ever seen operate. Every 5 or so seconds, it would fire with a distinctive sound. Attached by a big leather belt was another mechanism, that converted the turning of the flywheel, to another form of movement. If you think of a 6 foot steel wheel positioned horizontally, with a movement, clockwise about 90 degrees and back, that is what was there. Attached to the wheel were steel rods perhaps one inch thick, that ran off into 5 or 6 directions.

These rods, some over 200 ft long, went out to individual oil well pumps and the movement, back and forth, powered the well pumps. It was Rube Goldberg contraption for sure and fun to watch. Some of the rods traveled via supports, to wells across a stream, and other rods rested on notched wooden blocks, transferring their pulling power, as the engine barked intermittently. Speaking of barking, an area of land could be owned and worked by several different companies and it was difficult to know if their well system was actually working, so someone, fashioned a muffler that would cause the engine to make a distinctive sound or “bark.” Before long, there were many different sounding “barks” arising from the same area, giving their operators confirmation that their system was doing its job. What a noisy place the area would have been because the well motors were notoriously hard to start so usually, they ran 24/6, Sundays were quiet in the oil town. The rest of my day was spent riding to Kingston and like usual, I took mainly back roads, admiring the wonderful green countryside and interesting and historical houses. Although the skies were threatening, I only had to find shelter under an overpass once for a fast moving thunderstorm. I arrived at Dick’s 1860 brick house, at around 1900. It was kind of a long days riding, but hey, that’s life.



Dick and Terra

#### **6/24/2010 – Kingston, OH -0- Miles**

Ah, how nice to sleep in a real bed in air conditioned comfort. In the morning, Dick gave me a walking tour of his 177 acre estate, and we checked out both of his Civil War era homes, and various outbuildings, like his blacksmiths shop. Dick is very knowledgeable about the history of the area, and has made some really nice improvements to his estate. His land has 2 ponds, teeming with fish, a grass airstrip and several wetland acres, and several acres in corn. I enjoyed my time with Dick, an MD, and his wife Terra. They are really neat and amazing people, ah, I smell the steaks cooking on the BBQ, like I said, neat people.

#### **6/25/2010 Kingston OH, to Petersburg, MI – 335 Miles**

Dr. Dick fixed breakfast for me and we talked about Bible stuff until 1100 hrs. We said our goodbyes and I rode to Petersburg, mainly on back roads. The area of Dick’s house is rolling hills but before too long while on my ride, the terrain flattened out almost completely. I found the campground and checked in, I would be staying there for 3 nights.

#### **6/26/2010 Petersburg, MI – 46 local Miles**

I woke up and after breakfast headed to Dearborn, MI, home of the Henry Ford Museum, about 23 miles east of my campground. I had vouchers that I had bought at the campground, saving some money, but I needed to trade them in for actual tickets. There were 6 or 7 ticket windows, with a “cattle maze” in the middle. When I walked up, I noted that there were 3 open and staffed windows, and one family of 3 were dutifully making their way through the maze ahead of me.

I decided to forgo the maze and headed straight to the far window on the right and when I did, the “maze” man gave me a dirty look and said, “the line is over here.” I said that there were 3 open windows as he stepped up to the one near him. Stepping up to the window I was heading for, the young lady asked how I was doing today and I said “guessed that I was a scofflaw.” She said it didn’t bother her and we completed our business.



The car that President Kennedy was riding in when he was assassinated

I decided to take the Ford pickup factory tour first, and I was taken by bus to the visitor’s center where we saw a couple of short films and then walked on a walkway above the factory floor. It was interesting to see the assembly line working, and it seemed very efficient. I was seeing just a small part of the 4 mile long assembly line. After that, I spent most of the day at the museum and enjoyed seeing the many cars, airplanes and locomotives and lots of other things. One of the interesting items was the car that President Kennedy was riding in the day he was assassinated, and Admiral Bird’s Ford Tri-motor airplane that was flown to the South Pole. This is a world class collection and I was glad I decided to spend most of the day there. Around 1600 hrs, I left and headed back to camp with tired feet, where I took a nap and settled down for the night.

#### 6/27/2010 Petersburg, MI – Local Miles



The Wright Brothers Bicycle Shop

I woke to dry but threatening skies and after breakfast, I rode back to the Henry Ford complex so I could visit Ford’s Greenfield Village. The Village was opened in 1929 and was a project by Ford to preserve historical buildings and technologies. Would you like to visit the house of Noah Webster’s of dictionary fame? How about the Wright Brother’s family home and bicycle workshop? How about Thomas Edison’s Menlo Park complete workshop? When the workshop was re-assembled, Henry Ford brought Edison there to show him and Edison, sat in a wooden chair near the center of the workshop. After Edison left, Ford ordered that the chair be nailed to the floor to preserve it. Since then, the floor has been re-done, but not the area around the chair.

One two story brick building I visited was the Grimm Jewelry Store that had the store downstairs, and living accommodations up stairs. Henry Ford, was a customer there and liked the owner, Mr. Grimm. After the business closed, Henry found out that the store was going to be torn down to widen a street and he bought it and had it moved to Greenfield Village. Sometimes, people would walk by this store and see an old man in the store, working on a watch. That man was Henry Ford, then in his 80’s. While there, the tornado warning sirens went off and we were directed to one of the homes with a basement. The storm passed with heavy rain and some wind but thankfully, no tornado. In short, Greenfield is a wonderful, historical place to visit. If you visit there sometime, be sure to plan for a whole day. On the way home, it rained heavily, but ended quickly.

## 6/28/2010 Petersburg, MI to Muskegon, MI – 246 Miles

The ride today was interesting, but I almost got stuck in stop and go traffic, on Hwy 94 heading west. Wisely, I found some secondary roads and picked my way west through Ann Arbor, with the sun at my back as my guide. The weather is cooler today and the further west I went, the cooler and more pleasant it got. I stopped in the small town of Zeeland and was impressed at just how nice the restored town was and I had lunch at Frank's, an in town diner with a long history. This was a compact place because not only did they cook in front of you, they also washed the dishes which produced a busy clatter.



The real 200 year old Dutch Windmill

Heading west for 5 or so miles, I found my first attraction, an actual running Dutch windmill and today I was lucky, the usually schizophrenic wind today is blowing briskly and the windmill is busy grinding flour. The windmill is over 200 years old and was moved from its place in the Dutch countryside to its present location and is said to be 80 percent original with a few additions that were made to make visitor access easier. I joined a tour in progress on the second floor and we progressed to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor while the young blond lady, clad in traditional Dutch attire complete with wooden shoes, filled us in on how the mill operated. The blades are 40 ft long so the combined length with the hub is over 90 ft and the mill shakes and rumbles as the blades turn. Two of the blades today had sails attached, but with just the lattice on the blades, a 15 mph wind will turn them but not produce enough power to mill. With the big wooden gears turning overhead and the shaking, it was all pretty awesome. While the grain is milled on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, is stationed a miller with an

interesting job. There is a control that is moves the top millstone either up or down and controls the spacing of the milling stones. The blades of the windmill respond to the extra friction, slowing down. There is a small window so the miller can count the revolutions, as the blades sweep by. Since the wind is a bit gusty, every minute or so, an adjustment has to be made to get the maximum efficient work out of the wind power. A wooden chute which contains the flour exiting the millstones is near so the miller making the adjustments can sample the flour for its fineness. Oftentimes, they have to re-mill the flour in order to get the correct consistency. It was all too wonderful for someone that likes old mechanical equipment and I could have spent another hour checking out the mill but, I had other appointments to keep and it was nearly 1600 hrs.

About 20 miles north, is the town of Allendale and there is a wonderful huge, all brick fire station that has been turned into a museum. I originally learned of the building from a fire training video that was filmed there. The building has a very high and ornate tower and the styling, and use of almost cream colored bricks, accented with traditional red bricks that form lines make it one beautiful building. Unfortunately, the museum was closed for the day and I would have liked to see the inside of the place. I could get a good look at the fire apparatus bays because the station had glass doors. Oh, one of the really interesting things was that the station was actually moved, brick by brick to its present location, really hard to imagine.

Well on to Muskegon where I am staying with someone I met the last time I was out in this area. His name is Ronald Woodrum, and he was a member of CMA and I met him and his wife in 2003 in Milwaukee at the Harley 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Ronald is a die maker by trade, as well as a hunter and fisherman and he made me feel at home, cooking me a nice meal.



Kim, age 5

We compared notes of what has been going on and what we have been up to since 03 and Ronald, aged 54, has a new addition to his family, Kim, a beautiful 5 year old girl. It is their grandchild and they have adopted her. She likes to hunt and fish and has long blond hair, almond eyes of blue and a captivating smile, a very sweet child that they have rescued from foster care when she was one. My accommodations for the night, is a camping trailer and a nice bed I stretched out on, very comfortable. Well tomorrow, I am heading north.

### 6/29/2010 Muskegon, MI to St. Ignace, MI – 260 Miles

You may be wondering where in the heck is St. Ignace, MI? Easy, when you go over the Mackinac Bridge onto Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, St. Ignace is the first town you run into. It was an easy start this morning since I didn’t have to pick up my tent as usual, and I got on the road. I stopped at McD’s, not for me, but for the benefit of the journal readers, and you know who you are. But while I was at McD’s, slaving over the

journal, I consumed two sausage burritos (\$1.00 each), an order of Cinnamon Melts, and a large coffee to round out my breakfast. If you have not tried the “Melts,” they are pretty good and somewhat reminiscent of a Cinnabon, for about half the price.

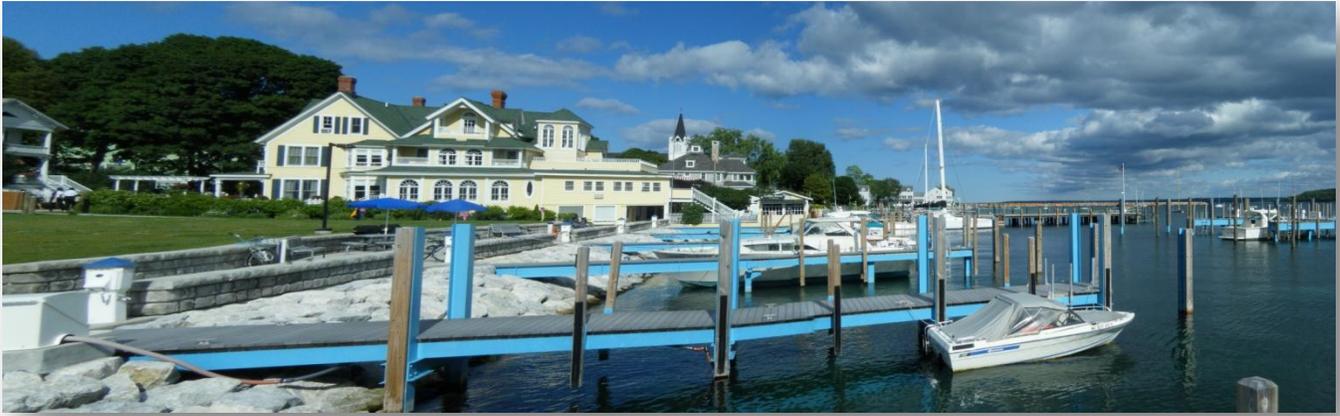
The ride to Mackinaw City was on good roads with little traffic, through mostly hardwood forests, yet, this was a fairly difficult day. It was pretty cool with a stiff wind blowing out of the west. To combat the cold, I had to resort to a heavy fleece pullover, an electric vest all topped with my armored riding jacket. My leg ensemble included jeans,

chaps, and my rain bottoms. My hands were covered with arctic mittens with gloves inside. And my riding boots were covered with my rain gaiters. All of this garb did the trick, but in case it didn’t, I had a couple of other options I could use. I could use a full face mask or, my full face helmet (that makes me feel like the Jack in the Box guy because the helmet is so big.) Also, I could put on thick wool socks and run the wires to my heated gloves and plug them into the juice. But, what I had assembled and donned, worked well.



Neat Street on Mackinaw Island

I arrived in Mackinaw City at about 1300 hrs, and located the ferry and learned that there was one due to leave about two minutes after I purchased my tickets. The ferry only took about 20 minutes to arrive at Mackinaw Island and I found the waterfront to be really pretty with forested hills in the background, and several pristine Victorian homes, lining the waterfront road. Mackinaw Island is unique in that there are only 8 motorized vehicles on the island and they are fire engines and police and emergency vehicles. The main mode of transportation is either something involving horses, or bicycles. I saw a sign about horse drawn tours and thought that would be a good way to see the area so I signed up. The tour was interesting and lasted a couple of hours. This Island was the second National Park formed, just after Yellowstone, but now it is a State Park. A very large and beautiful hotel is pretty high up on a hill and it is the Grand Hotel.



The least expensive rooms are \$450.00 per night and of course the sky is the limit, depending on what you are looking for in accommodations. Fudge shops seem to be a big deal on this island; it seemed there are probably 6 of them in the compact downtown area alone. I wanted to have a piece of chocolate peanut butter fudge, but I was having a difficult time finding a shop that would sell me just a couple of bites. Mainly, they sold slabs for around \$15. Finally, I found a shop that sold me 2 pieces for \$4.00 and wow, was it smooth on the tongue. I still have the other piece left which I will have tomorrow, or maybe tonight. In short, the island would be a nice destination for a romantic getaway if you're in the area sometime.

At 1830 hrs, I boarded the ferry to take me back to the mainland and soon I was riding over the magnificent Mackinaw Bridge, carefully fighting the blustery and gusty wind for control of the Harley. Within a couple of miles after paying my \$5.25 toll, there was a KOA, my stop for the night and what a cool, possibly cold night it will probably be. And now, a little trivia, so far, the computer says I have written 21,462 words in this journal so far. But that's not counting the missing words.

### **6/30/2010 Muskegon, St. Ignace, MI to Green Bay, WI – 280 Miles**

I awakened to nice weather and loaded up and got on the road (after a McD breakfast.) The weather is clear and cool but thankfully, not as cold and windy as yesterday. The first 80 miles along the Upper Peninsula, was sparsely populated and I was afforded some great vista's of Lake Michigan. The road for the most part was forest on either side and around noon, I started getting sleepy and so I stopped at a picnic spot and rested a little and had lunch. Feeling refreshed, I soon arrived at one of my scheduled stops, the museum in Peshtigo (pesh-tea-go), WI.

Peshtigo sits near the shore of Green Bay, and was once was a thriving manufacturing area of things made from wood. The vast virgin forest supplied the basic material for the factories that would make useful items like boats. The area has another distinction; it was ground zero of a forest fire of Biblical proportions. From Wikipedia: *The October 8, 1871 Peshtigo Fire in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, is the conflagration that caused the most deaths by fire in United States history.[1] Having occurred on the same day as the more infamous Great Chicago Fire, the Peshtigo Fire is mostly forgotten.* Before it was all over, the fire had burned 1,875 square miles of forest and killed between 1,200 and 2,500 people, 350 of which were interred in a mass grave. The museum I visited had photos and artists depictions and some items damaged during the fire, it was an interesting stop. I continued on to my campsite for the night, one about 12 miles south of Green Bay. The management here allowed me to use their shop so I could change my oil and they even set me up with the necessary items so I could wash my bike.

This is also a special place in one more respect; it has the best and cleanest showers so far, on the trip. Tomorrow, I am planning on visiting the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay then on to Oshkosh, so I can see the EAA 's wonderful museum.

### 7/1/2010 Green Bay, WI to Sheboygan, MI– 129 Miles



At the National Railroad Museum



Good weather this morning as I broke camp and headed to the National Railroad Museum about 12 miles away. Once I had arrived and paid for the attraction, I noticed something, the clock on the wall said that my clock was one hour too late, somewhere along the way, I had crossed a time zone and I didn't know it. Oh well! The railroad museum here has a wonderful collection of steam engines including the one called the "Big Boy." The engine is huge; it weighs 1,208,750 lb and is 132 Ft. long and over 16 ft high. While looking at it, it is hard to conceive that men actually built it, and that the behemoth actually moves. I went on the mile and a half long train ride and the woman next to me nearly jumped into the air when the horn was blown. All in all, a great place to visit if you like trains.

Next I rode 40 miles or so miles to the Experimental Aviation Association Museum(EAA) in Oshkosh, WI. I had visited the museum in 2003 when I rode to the area for the Harley Ride Home, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of HD. It is a wonderful place with all sorts of interesting aviation things to look at. I toured the main galleries and took the shuttle to an area of hangers filled with all sorts of vintage aircraft and airplane engines. While there, I noted that they were offering rides in a 1927 Swallow biplane, and the claim was made that it was the oldest plane in the US that is still giving rides. Well that did it for me and my rationalism mechanism went into overdrive and well, I signed up. While we were taxi-ing out for takeoff on the grass strip, I noted that the engine kind of sounded and felt, like a Harley, I liked that. After a

short roll, we were off and climbing nicely into the clear skies with a wonderful view of Oshkosh and the surrounding farmlands. The pilot said that we could fly low and slow about 500 ft above the wonderful countryside, or, a bit higher where we could do some steep turns and a lazy 8, I opted for the more exciting selection and he threw in a approach stall much to my enjoyment. The steep turns were fun and the stall was brisk and all too soon, it was time for the flyby, then around one more time, for the landing. How wonderful to ride in a plane that is 83 years old and still "thrilling the crowds." After spending several hours at the museum, I headed to Sheboygan where I found a campsite at the Kohler-Andrae State Park on the shore of Lake Michigan. Tomorrow, I have a reservation to tour the Kohler factory, you know Kohler, the place that makes fine faucets and kitchen and bathroom fixtures. After that, I head for Shelly's for a weekend of holiday fun. can see the EAA 's wonderful museum.

## 7/2/2010 Sheboygan, MI to Schaumburg, IL– 145 Miles

My first stop this morning on this wonderfully clear day, is the Kohler Factory Design Center in Kohler, MI. Kohler, years ago, started out making farm equipment and has progressed to being a respected name in Kitchen and plumbing fixtures, and power generators. The factory at one time had a total of 25,000 workers and a wonderful company town although with our current economic situation, the Kohler payroll is down considerably. The village of Kohler is just a short distance from Sheboygan, and its streets are lined with wonderful, interesting, and beautiful homes. Our small tour was led by “Joe” who, like his father, worked at Kohler all his life and now at 80 – something, was still leading tours. Joe worked in the pottery section where toilets were made and he said that in the entire factory, “the pottery shop was the best place to work.” We watched a short film then walked through the factory gates with our safety glasses, headsets, so we could hear Joe, and our water bottles. The pottery shop was closed for maintenance but the other areas of the factory were open. We saw how the sand molds were made for the making of cast iron bath tubs, and we got a peek at the automated process where they are poured, in the “Herman Section.” The Herman section was just what you would think of a foundry being, hellishly dark and a bit smoky with looming, massively huge equipment and hotter than Heck. The most interesting part of the tour was an area where the tubs get their porcelain finish. The tubs are heated “cherry red,” then brought out where they are hand sprinkled with the porcelain powder, which is finely ground glass. It looked like a horrible job and Joe said the man doing it, had been doing it for 31 years. Once the first coat is applied, back into the furnace it goes, where it is once again heated cherry red and a second coating of the same material is applied. The finely ground glass melts when it contacts the red hot metal, and that is how porcelain is made.

At one point on the tour, Joe kind of gave us a scare. There were a couple of parts lines moving large castings across our tour path so Joe would pull on a handle attached to a chain and the line would stop, allowing us to pass then on the other side, a handle on the other side was pulled, and the line would start up again. Well, Old Joe was ahead of us walking and he was seemingly oblivious to the moving line and he walked right through an open space between two of the heavy moving parts, he forgot to pull the handle. If the timing would have been just a bit different, Old Joe would have been knocked down and injured for sure. Of course, us tour-ees, didn’t follow Joe, and he seemed embarrassed that he had had such a safety lapse.

After safely completing the tour which was nearly 2 miles long, I spent some time looking at many of their designer bathrooms on display, some of which are so nice, they seem to make going to the bathroom, fun. One display solved a mystery for me, lately, waterless urinals have been showing up in the men’s rooms and there is no flush. One would think that a urinal like this would stink but, they don’t seem to. I wondered how this was possible but now the mystery has been solved. Just below the drain is a few inches of something like oil (which floats on water.) The urine goes through the drain, then it settles through the oil like material, and, that’s how it works, pretty simple actually. The coating on the inside of the urinal piping is specially made to not collect material thus, that helps keep odor producing contaminants from forming. Well, enough “pee pipe” talk, after the tour, I rode some of Kohler’s streets, admiring the houses and neatly manicured lawns and soon, after a stop at the local HD shop for a new fuel valve, I headed toward Shelly’s apt.

I decided to take the interstate but before too long, a massive traffic jam loomed up ahead so I took the nearest exit and within 5 or so miles to the west, I found a highway that paralleled the interstate which took me in the same direction. I arrived at Shelly’s apt complex about 2 hours before Shelly would be home, I was hot and tired so I found the closest parking place in the shade, and sat down and traded my hot riding boots, for my sneakers.

While I was changing my shoes, a Chinese man came up and was asking me questions about the Harley and so I gave him a tour of sorts. He said his name was “Shalom” and he invited me into his nearby apartment and got me some cool water and some orange slices. He spoke pretty good English but sometimes, it was a little difficult. He had been in America for a couple of years working for a company that provides items made by his company to stores here. His apartment was a mess and was designed for work, not for comfort. One of his bedrooms was not a bedroom, it was a warehouse. He said his company pays for everything associated with the room. We had a nice conversation and he was surprised that I knew as much as I did about China, especially about the Cultural Revolution. We talked about various subjects for about an hour and then we parted; I sensed he had some computer work to do and told him that I appreciated his hospitality. I headed to a nearby park and did some reading of my book which is a bio on Howard Hughes.

Soon I headed back to Shelly’s and it was nice to see her and Bren again as well as their sweet Boxer Dog, Lola. We talked and they took me to a salad buffet called “Sweet Tomatoes” for dinner. The food was good but soon it was 10, and I was dog tired so off to bed I went.

### **7/3/2010 Schaumburg, IL**



Today after breakfast, Shelly, Dan and I boarded the train and headed toward downtown Chicago; where we would eventually get to our destination, the Chicago Museum of Technology. But first, we stopped Giordano’s Pizza Restaurant, where we had a couple of slices of deep dish, Chicago Pizza Pie. The pizza was really good and I found the crust to be like pie crust, instead of bread like. After that, we walked to another train line several blocks away and in one of the underground passageways, I saw a black woman dressed in a beautiful white dress, cooling herself from the flow of a giant fan. She had one hand maintaining control of her flowing dress, while her other hand held a slice of watermelon she had

bought at a nearby festival. With the contrast of shades and colors, this scene would have made a wonderful photo, similar to Monroe’s famous flowing dress photograph.

We arrived at the museum and it is a massive place featuring many interesting exhibits like a simulated, 40 ft high tornado, a title wave generator and an indoor coal mine. But, the item that drew me to this particular museum was the German Submarine, U-505. The U-505 was the only submarine captured intact during WWII. The ramifications of the capture were far reaching, affecting the outcome of the war because contained within the submarine, was the secret message de-coder known as the Enigma Machine. The sub’s capture was kept secret, and as far as the Germans knew, the submarine was sunk. The story is an interesting one but too long for these pages but now, the U-505 is in permanent dry dock in an underground chamber and the first time it comes into view, it is an impressive site. Our first look is at deck level from the bow and we could see torn holes in the side of the upper structure that attest to the ferocity of the firefight that caused the crew to abandon their sub.

After spending ample time looking at the U-505's exhibits, we sauntered through most of the rest of the museum checking out some of the more interesting exhibits but soon, it was time to head back. When we arrived at our train platform for the first leg of our trip, there was a distraught elderly woman who had been apparently been drinking and had been mistakenly sent to the wrong platform to catch the train she needed. Shelly seeing her distress helped her figure out where she needed and gave her comfort in order to calm her down. When last seen, she was heading for the right platform. Between the two train rides, we walked several blocks through the busy downtown. I enjoyed looking at both the older ornate high rise buildings, as well as some of the newer ones like the Sears Tower. The train ride home was pretty crowded but uneventful. After arriving at Shelly's, Shelly prepared a nice meal of pan fried chicken, Israeli Couscous, and salad. There was cherry pie standing by for desert but I couldn't manage it and around 2130 hrs, I headed to bed for some reading and coma-like sleep.

### **7/4/2010 Schaumburg, IL**

Today, was a very relaxing day and since it is pretty hot and humid outside, it's a good day to stay in. We watched several hours of "The Story of Us" on the History channel, I caught up on the journal and took a nap, and did some reading. After dark, the interesting part of the day started. We took Shelly's dog, Lola out for some exercise at a nearby park and when we arrived, four teenagers also arrived with boxes of fireworks which they preceded to light. For being "store bought" fireworks, they were pretty impressive, also illegal, as we discovered when an unmarked police vehicle arrived. The teenagers hid in a strip of forest. Soon the police left and the show resumed, complete with our applauding after each nice display. Then, about 100 yards to our west, some competition arrived and their display completely outclassed the teenagers. The new display was spectacular with all the basic displays, screamers, multi-colors, and starbursts and an occasional ½ stick. The whole illegal event was kind of like a 45 minute long private show and we didn't have to fight the crowds, it was a wonderful celebration. Well, what else was left except a nice long nights sleep, so, after a shower, off I went.

### **7/5/2010 Schaumburg, IL to Doniphan, NE (near I-80 milepost 318) – 602 miles**

Like a "barn sour" horse, heading for home, I got carried away riding and put in a good day. Getting a fairly early start, I rode an hour or so and got some breakfast at a little farm town diner. The ham skillet breakfast was the best of the trip and along with coffee, under \$6.00, a bargain. I road through a lot of farms and cornfields in western Illinois but unfortunately, the corn was being watered by a storm coming in from the west. The rain was more of a

nuisance rain than anything, randomly scattered drops, hardly getting the road wet. My route seemed to thread around the darkest parts of the storm but eventually, I had to take shelter under an overpass until one downpour moved on, it was pretty scary because people, just don't slow down.

I stopped in Walnut, Iowa and visited the cemetery where my sweet mother in law rests, and the place that will be my final rest many years from now (hopefully.) What was once a wonderful cornfield view is now contaminated by no less than 60 giant windmills recently installed.



More than "knee high on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July."

Oh well, there goes the neighborhood. I made a run through town and noted that the bakery was closed today and I found the small farm that Don Fischer, my father in law, operated for a short while. I also inspected the height of the corn that as the saying goes, "knee high by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July." Well the corn was over my head and some of the plants had already sent their silk out, begging for pollination. I liked the healthy dark green color of the corn and thought the countryside was really pretty.

Well, back on the interstate and I rode until 1900 and stayed at a nice KOA for only \$20.00 Shower, reading (a biography of Howard Hughes) and I faded to black.

### **7/6/2010 Doniphan, NE (near I-80 milepost 318) to Craig, CO 598 miles**

I dutifully stayed on Interstate 80 for 200 miles heading west, but I was plagued with an overwhelming feeling, it was just boring! So boring in fact, that I would look at nearly every mileage marker, just to see if I was really making any progress. Near the ne corner of Colorado, the it all came to a head as the road to Colorado and a decision had to be made. On one hand, boring and home faster and on the other, a beautiful ride up the Poudre River drainage and lots of interesting landforms to look at. I turned left toward Colorado. In Julesburg, I checked the trailer bearing temperature and noted that one of the dust covers had taken leave. Then I remembered hearing something and seeing something in my mirror about 100 miles back, I thought it was just something I hadn't seen on the road. I found a steel shop and they had a replacement for \$3.20. The replacement did fit like it should so I cleaned the surfaces and used duct tape while having a nice conversation with Rex, who was a local firefighter.

Back on the road, I was on an 80 mile stretch of prairie grasslands and everywhere I looked, it was kind of the same but there were some building clouds on my right which were interesting to watch. There were also some along the Rocky Mountains in front of me and it was not too long before I saw the mountains rise up. It was nice to see some vertical ground for a change. My ride up the river was long but interesting with more bugs than I had anytime earlier on the trip, one of the nicest scenic rides I know of, I had ridden it years ago. I arrived at my camp near Craig, CO at 2030. It had been a long day so after fixing my meal in a can, some reading and off to sleep.

### **7/7/2010 Craig, CO to Ely NV. - 554 miles**

I was off to an early start and soon, I was on the road heading west, on Hwy - 40. After about 2 hours, I came to the town of Vernal Utah and what a sight, along both sides of the main street, in a section about 2 miles long, are hundreds of large flower baskets filled to the brim with beautiful purple, red, and white flowers. The baskets were in groups of 3, hanging on the vintage looking streetlamps, and large pots of flowers were sitting on the edge of the sidewalks, between them. I have never seen anything quite like this before, it was beautiful. At Duchesne, I stopped and had some lunch and rested up while, keeping an eye on a large thunderstorm that was building nearby. I made a turn onto Hwy 191 and headed to Helper and this section of the ride took me through a wonderful long canyon, that was fairly wide and simply gorgeous. The canyon contained wonderful rock formations, trees and a bit of ranching going on in the bottom while overhead, boiling clouds as I passed below the huge thunderstorm that was still building. I could smell the pungent odor of wet sage which is a wonderful smell.



A Coal Seam I wanted a closer look at.

I expected to get clobbered by rain but somehow, I managed to dodge anything serious. At the coal town of Helper, I fueled up and headed toward Provo, UT on Hwy 6, then turned left on Hwy 96 toward Fairview. This stretch of road was again really interesting, with lakes and the road slowly gaining elevation until becoming alpine meadows with grazing sheep. Around one corner I came to a coal mine that had about 2 miles of conveyer belt running above the side of the road from the mine, to the loading terminal. The pristine beauty of the area didn't somehow jive with the industrial nature of the mine, but, there it was. The last 5 miles of this stretch was a decent down a canyon to the scrub brush and the small town

of Fairview, my how fast the scenery can change.

I continued heading sw to the town of Delta, which is at the east end of Hwy 50; billed as the "Loneliest Highway in America." I have been over Hwy 50 several times and I always enjoy it. The highway is nice and smooth and progress is marked by mountain ranges, not mile markers like on the interstates. I rolled west, enjoying the vistas and ended my day in Ely, NV where the lady checking me into the KOA and deducted \$10.00 from my camping fee because I had earned enough KOA Reward points. That was great because this was probably the last KOA I would stay at this year, so that worked out nicely.

### 7/8/2010 Ely, NV to Home - 506 Miles



Nearly Home on Hwy 50 – I'm "Barn-sour"

I got an early start and at McD's in Ely, ran into a 70 something man, on a new Triumph motorcycle that was packed to the gills. He had made a luggage box for the back of his bike out of fiberglass and it was a wonderful job he did however, the bike was obviously overloaded. He was from the Woodland, CA area, and was canceling his trip due to "front end problems." I asked him if the problem could have been too much weight on the back and he said no, that he had tried moving things around and it didn't work so he thought his steering gear needed tightening. His diagnosis seemed unlikely since his bike was new. He said he was canceling his trip and heading back home which was too bad. I headed toward Fallon, NV, and arrived just before noon and took a strange detour. I like a

particular airplane built in the mid 1940's, called a Republic - Seabee. Google it in images, and you can see what they look like. Anyway, I remembered that at the Fallon airport, there was a company that repaired these planes, and I wanted to get a closer look at one because I had not been inside one. I followed the GPS commanding voice and long story short, I could see the airport but rode clear around it and couldn't find the entrance. It was getting hot and I had invested nearly a half and hour in this worthless pursuit, so I gave up. I stopped in Stead, NV, for lunch and to cool off and then headed home via, Hwy 70. Overhead it was building thunderstorms but it was a welcome addition to the ride, because the shade and occasional scattered raindrops, kept me cooler. As I passed Jarbo Gap, I saw a couple of Cal-Fire Crews spiked out, in case the lightning of the storm caused some fires, those poor guys! Around 1700 hrs. I neared Chico, the 90 degree heat greeted me along with the fully cured, dry grass which was still

somewhat green when I started my trip. On the porch was Kathleen and Abby, waiting for me and one of them barked a greeting as I went by. Wow, was it great to be home. The 2010 leg of my trip turned out to be nearly 6 1/2 weeks long, and 9,331 miles. During these miles, I saw a lot of pretty places but I was always reminded of the harsh and sometimes brutal winters they endure. All things considered, with perhaps the exception of Asheville, NC, Chico is probably one of the best places, I've seen to live.

It has been a remarkable trip with so many sights and interesting people, a once in a lifetime ride for sure. I thank the Good Lord, for allowing me the opportunity to travel across America like this, and His provision of safety, and health for the many miles, many people prayed for me during this trip, and I appreciate that and know your prayers were effective. I also appreciate Kathleen, she supported my trip and kept things running smoothly at home, she is one in a million for sure. I also thank Harley Dav..... I'm just kidding. Thanks dear reader for your interest and for tagging along with me during this long and interesting ride.



