

Friday October 16th, 2009

By: Keith Sorrels

My adventure started well because Kathleen made me a nice breakfast complete with blueberry pancakes, eggs and bacon. The planned time of departure was 0800 hrs but the real time was 0810, not bad. The morning dawned cool and just south of town was a nice fog bank which kept me company until I was east of Butte College. The ride up the Feather River Canyon was peaceful with little traffic and I saw that the further up the canyon I rode, the amount of fall colors increased. In Quincy, there was a lot of color to see with bright splashes of yellow and gold, and occasional bursts of hot pink and near red Dogwoods. I continued east to Hwy 395 and proceeded south. This part of the ride is kinda boring, threading through the traffic of Sparks, Reno and Gardnerville. At Walker, I stopped and paid my respects at a memorial to the 3 air tanker pilots that lost their lives when the wings separated from their C-130 retardant bomber. This was the horrible accident that was caught on video seen on the news. There was quite a collection of makeshift offerings, various fire department patches, even a length of fire hose. It was sad, but I am sure thankful that nothing like that occurred on any of the many fires I had flown on during my 13 years in Air Attack. Just past Walker, the ride becomes very scenic as the road parallels the Walker River with so many wonderful views of fall color; I took quite a number of photos. After awhile, I was at the Mono Lake overlook and what a sight. Mono Lake is so primordial looking, that I expect to see a Dinosaur walking along the shore. While gawking at the scene, there was a man nearby with a formable looking camera and I ask him if he would take my photo using my camera. He did and took one of me with his own camera. I gave him a Herald times (HT) and explained that I was one of those people that read the Bible maybe too much. He seemed pleased to take the tract but told me that it probably would not change him. He said he used to be a Baptist but now was a Buddhist he said that the more he read the Bible the worse it was. His problem was that the Bible painted mankind as evil and the attractive part



about being a Buddhist was that they believe that man is basically good. I had never heard that one before and of course, my best comeback was one I thought of later while back on the road. Certainly God is able of reach him, I pray He does. Continuing, I found myself in the snow zone and although the roads were clear, it was certainly colder. On to Bishop and then Lone Pine and I arrived at the campground just as darkness fell. After supper, I did some reading and watched an episode of Man V Wild on the little computer.

Saturday October 17th, 2009

Dawn was clear, fairly warm and dry. I got packed up in record time and went to a local park in town to fill up my water supply for my ride through Death Valley. After that I went to McD for a

Breakfast Burrito and soon I was heading east. After about 35 miles I came to a large valley which is like a small Death Valley. I rode another 30 miles to the real Death Valley. It is warm here probably in the low 90's and I enjoy looking at the various landscapes as I tool along. After exiting the valley the fairly bleak landscape stays about the same clear past Los Vegas. I skirted the main part of Sin City and soon was at the Hoover Dam. They check all the cars for bombs I suppose and just my luck, they flagged me over for a special look in my trailer. All clear, back on my way. As I got closer to Kingman, I have a dilemma, I really like eating at Cracker Barrel (CB) and there is one in Kingman but there is not one in Williams where I am staying for the night. It is about 1600 hrs when I arrive at Kingman and although I am hungry, I decide to roll on because I expect darkness to fall an hour early since I have moved into a different time zone. This was a good call because as I arrived in Williams, it was almost dark. The campground where I was going to stay had a sign that said "Closed for the Season." I wasn't expecting that so I typed in RV into my GPS and was glad to see a place about 3 miles away. The RV park is real nice with clean restrooms and showers and it sure felt good to be clean again. Instead of Pulled Pork at the CB, I had a can of Progresso Chicken Noodle soup which actually tasted pretty good. While I was typing this, a couple of bikers ambled over to look at the small computer. They were a father and daughter that had ridden here from Lake Havasu. I showed them how nice the display is on this computer and that you can even watch recorded TV programs. We had a nice conversation, I told them that I was going to the CMA rally and so they knew I was a believer. Before we parted, I gave them one of the Harold Times tracts. They seemed pleased to get it and the daughter said she would read it. Well, it is about bedtime so I had better get to it.

Sunday October 18, 2009



The day dawned bright finally! I say finally because the place where I stayed was real close to a well used railroad and even with my earplugs correctly installed, the noise seemed intent on keeping me awake. Now one would figure that at this elevation and time of the year, it would be real cold first thing in the morning, it wasn't. I bundled up anyway since Flagstaff is even a higher elevation and that was going to be my next stop. I figured correctly and was glad for the added layers. As I headed east, the sun was right in my face making for a somewhat glaring ride. I stopped at McD for another breakfast burrito and large coffee no surprises except one. Seeing that most of my coffee was still in the cup, I set it aside in the dining area while I visited the restroom. When I returned to reclaim my coffee, a homeless (looking) man was vacating the area of my cup. Upon inspection of my cup, I found that he had checked the playing pieces for the current game that McD is having. No winners for him at least

on my cup but it would have been interesting if he would have won something. Now I am heading east on the interstate 40 which I dread. I don't find the interstates to be any fun at all. Before long I exited the truck conveyer belt at Holbrook and onto a normal highway which is more to my liking. The route today is sort of like a bikers dream. Interesting countryside, scattered big puffy clouds and enough thunder storms to make it interesting and blue sky. Oh the sky was probably the most beautiful I had ever seen, the deepest and clearest blue contrasted with the wonderful clouds. Amazing! Here and there were patches of bright golden



Cottonwoods, at one point, I had to double back to take some snaps. Up ahead is Pie Town, yep that is the real name of the place. This is my 3rd visit and the last time I was at the Pie Town "Pie-n-oeer" Café, I gave one of my Herald Times to the waitress. I wondered if she would remember me. She didn't until I showed her one of the HT's, then she remembered saying "it's still back there" while she pointed to the kitchen. It was all so abrupt that there was no room for me injecting a question like, did you read it? Well I guess I made an impression all right, not

only was she not interested in the Gospel, she was mathematically challenged. When my bill arrived it was as follows: Pie \$4.95, Ice Cream \$1.50, and Coffee \$1.50 and the total was \$12.03. Math was not my best subject but even I spotted a problem and ask the clerk to please check the math for me. Oops, sorry. Oh by the way the Cherry pie was the best, the crust was so light and flakey and was a suitable lunch. Just east of Pie Town is the Continental Divide with a elevation of nearly 7,000 ft. Really nice scenery all the way to Socorro NM where I stopped and bought a few things at Wal-Mart and got a Iced Mocha at McD. The rest of the ride to the Valley of Fires Park near Carrizozo, NM was uneventful. This route is the closest highway to where the first Atomic Bomb was detonated. At the state park, I found a nice spot to call mine for the night and set about making supper. Tonight's dish is Peanut Noodles by "A Taste of Thai". I liked it because it was quick, easy and filling. I give it an 8 out of 10. Well it is 1930 hrs and amazingly warm. Time for another installment of Man vs Wild on the tiny laptop. All in all, a wonderful riding day seeing all the landscapes our Amazing God has created.

Monday October 19, 2009

The sun rose bright and clear at the Valley of the Fires State Park. My morning routine is as follows (some of the more personal aspects are left to the imagination of the reader). First I pull the plug on my sleeping mattress to let it deflate while I lay on it and next, I roll out of the sleeping bag and stuffed it (the sleeping bag) into its bag and I stuff the pillow into its bag. If it was cold and I used the big orange wool blanket, I fold it up and put it into its bag. Next, I position all the items toward the door of the tent for easy retrieval. When all the items are loaded up on the trailer, I break down the tent after cleaning the inside by lifting the whole tent over my head and shaking all the loose material out the door. The tent is then rolled up in the

clean side of the ground cloth which has been folded to the length of the tent and the whole neat compact roll is fastened with a couple of dog collars with the nice plastic clips. If I do everything right, I can be ready to roll in about 20 minutes. So now with that all said, in subsequent postings I will simply say "I broke camp". My first stop was at a nice restaurant, in fact, the only restaurant in Carrizozo, NM. On the way home with Bert several weeks ago, we stopped and had dinner at the same place, I had tacos and they were great. This morning I had Huevos Ranchos and that dish was good as well. They have wifi (Internet connection) there so I did some email stuff but soon I was on the road again heading once again into the sun. The ride is nice with Pinion covered hills and once again I pass the place where Smokey the Bear was found and I decided not to stop and film the scene as I have on probably at least 3 occasions. In another 20 miles, the terrain becomes mainly a sagebrush desert and proceeding east from Roswell it stays fairly flat, mostly grasslands. Continuing east and I see those large circular farms which use those .large moving sprinklers. Soon there is a lot of dry farming going on and as I head east, it is really getting hot, how hot you ask? 91 degrees and I am drinking water like a madman. Around lunchtime, I stopped at MD for a salad and was horrified to see that the time on my watch was 2 hours slow, instead of just after 1, it was after 3. That meant that I would be completing my ride to Wichita Falls in the dark and that is something I can't do. Riding a motorcycle is bad enough at times hazard wise, but riding when you can't clearly see the road or things that move like deer, it is just not my idea of a good time. I had pre arranged my accommodations with a CMA couple in Wichita Falls but, I was clearly not going to make it so I called them and canceled. Now the problem arose of where to stay, these northern Texas towns are not really known for their many RV Parks and a look at the GPS confirmed that there



My camp is in the little shelter

was no state parks or RV parks anywhere around. With this in mind, I soon discovered that the town I was relying on to get gas did not have a gas station. The nearest town was 27 miles north which was Paducah, TX. I was not yet on my reserve fuel which is about ½ gallon but, I could see that my trip meter said 152 which is about the point where the engine starts sputtering and I flip the fuel valve to reserve. A look to my left confirmed that the sun was indeed setting and it would be dark in an hour or less so I breathed a prayer like this, Lord, please help me find a place to stay. Before long the engine sputtered and I knew I only had 20

miles of fuel left so I looked at the GPS and it was only 15 miles to the town so I was OK. I also carry an extra gallon of fuel on the trailer so when I run out on the main tank, I can still go another 40 miles. As I rolled into town one of the first things I noticed was a nice little self service RV park with 6 spaces, all of which were empty. Well thank the Lord for that and even better, someone nearby has been kind enough to leave their Wifi unlocked so I have Internet service, very cool!

Tuesday October 20th 2009

Morning arrived with the sound of several locals heading to work in their diesel pickups past my camp. I broke camp and said bye-bye to Puducah as I motored east on Hwy 70 through the somewhat crisp air. I didn't fix anything for breakfast since I wanted to ride for an hour or so before eating. After about an hour I came to the town of Vernon, TX and found a McD but before I had parked I saw a doughnut shop which claimed to be the "Best in Vernon". Since I always have a soft spot for the doughy goodness of my round friends, I altered my course and parked in front of the shop. I cannot really judge since I did not try the other shop (if there is one) but the doughnuts were really good. As I was sitting and eating one of the 3 FREE doughnut holes she blessed my basket with, I noticed that the shop itself was very neat and clean but the door to the establishment was another matter. The front of the shop was all glass but the lower four feet was covered with some sort of white appliqué which at one time probably looked pretty good. But the years had not been kind and there were cracks crazed here and



there. The problem I spotted was that on the glass door, the lower panel of appliqué was really dirty as though an army of dirty little hands stained with red clay, had left their marks over the last several years. It puzzled me that such a clean shop would have such a dirty door. I thought someone should point this out to them, certainly they would appreciate it, wouldn't they? Should I tell them? Or would they get mad? I asked Kathleen as though she was sitting across from me, for her opinion and she said, "NO WAY" and something like questioning if I

was an idiot. By the way, I had to let the spell checker correct the word idiot for me that probably means something. As I was getting ready to leave, another drama was brewing. There was a woman sitting behind me that was wearing a Harley tee shirt. She must have borrowed it from somebody because she was a bespectacled woman that could adequately be described as "mousey". When she saw that I was ready to go, she hurried herself and went out the door just ahead of me and of course she was parked right next to me. When I left the shop, she was struggling with the hood of her white ford pickup. This all struck me as some sort of choreographed situation which I ignored while putting on the first of my three layers. This plan worked well until my helmet became dislodged from the handle bar and went crashing to the ground, rolling to her feet as she retrieved it. Oh great, I thought, her plan worked beautifully. Since she had helped me, I could no longer ignore her plight. I ask if she needed help and she said her battery cable was loose. Ah, a crisis person, I thought as I helped her open the hood. She was right, the cable was indeed loose and I put some pressure on it when she turned the motor over so the starter got all the juice it needed and she was running. She said thanks and said something about getting to work so I bid her adio. So maybe it was not a set-up after all, now I feel a bit jilted, just kidding Kathleen! I continued east and fought a pretty good right cross wind for quite a while. Sometimes the hills would be smooth and the wind would really flow and

strike me full blast. My next stop was Gainesville TX where I was once again at McD's. An older man entering just before me said I was lucky to be riding today since it is supposed to rain tomorrow. After I got my food, I saw that he was sitting alone and so I ask if I could join him and he said "sure". He seemed to be at least in his 70's and we had a pleasant conversation. I found out he was a vet and had served in the Army in Viet Nam. He told me about a heartbreaking event where there were a number of South Vietnamese Army Rangers that were making fun of him and his brother soldiers because they had just came back to the fire base after several days on patrol without the possibility of a shower, while the Rangers were all spit and polish and proud of themselves. After our soldiers had cleaned up, both units were going out on patrol and the Vietnamese Rangers were in the lead. Jerry told one of the Rangers not to



My camp is next to the little brush pile 1

“advance backwards” (retreat). While on the patrol, the Ranger unit ran into the enemy that was in company strength, meaning they were highly outnumbered. Instead of fighting the enemy and calling for back-up, they ran back toward the US soldiers. While this might have worked in an open area where there was good visibility so everyone could understand what was going on, they were in an area of 6ft high Elephant Grass and Jerry's unit knew nothing else but that the enemy was coming at them in a charge, so they opened fire, killing many of the South Vietnamese Rangers. Tragic, but war is

nothing but tragedy, Satan's crowning achievement. Anyway, Jerry felt that the Afghanistan war was becoming another Viet Nam. It is sure interesting the things you learn and the stories you hear talking to “strangers”. Back on the road which led me to Paris, TX. I took the time to cruise the town and I thought it was pretty nice. The old town square was a happening place with most of the stores occupied. As I continued heading east from Paris, the landscapes became really nice and real trees appeared as well as some really nice estates. A couple of hours later, I arrived at Hatfield, AR. Headquarters for the CMA (Christian Motorcyclist Association). Within 10 minutes of me arriving, I was eating chicken and dumplings and sitting around a campfire with some Texas CMA members. I think they have adopted me. Well, showers done, journal updated, I think I am going to hit the hay, it sure is a big country!

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

I really slept well last night although just before waking, I had a vivid dream that I was standing alongside the ocean and saw several large crocks swim by. I could see by their weathered backs that they were a long way from their real homes. I watched as they got to the rocky shore and one of the larger ones was heading for me, hungry from the long swim no doubt. As the Crock got closer for some reason, I jumped into the water and was thinking, Great! Now I am in

his environment. As the Crock leapt into the water, thankfully, I woke up. I made some breakfast and coffee and took a short ride to Iron Mountain where the actual event was to take place. I registered and then checked out the camping area and decided that it would be a good idea to move my camp, so I did. Just steps away from my tent is a large pavilion which would be a good place to spend some time while it is raining, and rain is coming.

Thursday, October 22, 2009

It rained all night but I was warm and dry inside my trusty tent. Last night's service was really good which was on the theme of forgiveness. This morning we had another meeting and after, I checked out the showers and there were several empty so I got cleaned up. There are a lot of CMA'ers here the count yesterday was 2,500 in attendance. Since it was raining, I stayed pretty close to camp until about 1700 hrs when the rain stopped, I rode into town to get something to eat and to find a wife.

Sunday, October 26, 2009



A couple of friends I made at Colors

A new day and time to say good bye to the CMA "Changing of the Colors Rally". Despite the rainy days, I enjoyed the rally's speakers and activities, but today, it's time to ride. I had done a lot of packing the night before so I had a minimum amount of camp breakdown to do and I was ready to roll in record time. The morning is mostly clear but there are large patches of clouds lingering and it is pretty cool, in the low 60's. This morning I am heading to visit one, of the air tanker pilots I used to work with, Ron. Ron and

his wife, Linda. They live in Hot Springs Village, AR, which is a large gated community on a lake

about 15 miles north of Hot Springs AR. The route takes me through the center of Hot Springs which I really enjoyed since there are several large old brick buildings. During the era of Al Capone, the 1930's, Hot Springs was the place to be, as testified by several really large brick hotels I could see. It seems the water at Hot Springs was so hot; it had to be cooled before it could be used in the spa's. The gangster gangs maintained a pretty successful truce while conducting their "family time" while vacationing at Hot Springs. After I left the downtown area, I obediently followed the directions of my GPS and was a little disappointed when it led me to an unattended gate to the "Village". I headed toward what I thought was the main gate which was about 12 miles away and found it interesting that the GPS insisted that I do a U turn and return to the unattended gate. The guard at the main gate was nice and my friend Ron had called ahead to let them know that I was coming. I call the sometimes aggravated female voice of my GPS, "Ouhla" from the Mel Brooks movie, The Producers. As soon as I left the guard shack, Ouhla, had an epiphany, now she is suggesting a new route, on roads I can actually ride on. Ron's house is lovely and overlooks the lake where his boat dock is located. I haven't seen Ron

and his wife for several years and it was good to catch up over coffee. Ron collects Juke Boxes and has a total of three of the large music makers. Soon we parted and I headed toward Little Rock where I would be staying with Mike and his wife, Sharon. The day had warmed up a bit and I enjoyed seeing the colors of the trees and I rode. I arrived at Mike's in good time and got settled in. They took me out for a Mexican dinner which was real nice. Soon it was time for bed, so off I went.

Monday, October 27, 2009



Mike and Sharon's cool cat

I stayed with Mike and Sharon today and we went to Tractor Supply for grease to repack the bearings on the trailer and a couple of new tires for the trailer. Mike did the tire work which I appreciated and I serviced the bearings.

Tuesday, October 28, 2009

I suspected that it would be raining when I woke up in the morning and my suspicions were correct. I dressed in my raingear and bravely headed out into the gloomy, wet day. The rain

fell in what I would call a medium heavy torrent while I threaded my way through Little Rock's morning rush traffic and sometimes bottomless pot holes. Soon the traffic lightened as I got away from the city but the rain did not. The terrain is pretty flat with heavy hardwood forests but beyond that, I can't really tell since I have to concentrate on the road ahead. I notice a blue light ahead and I soon see that a car has skidded off the road in into the ditch, probably a result of hydroplaning because I feel the bike plain a little when I hit a place where the water is flowing its way to a drain. I slow down to 50 which helps dampen the unwanted effect. Speaking of damp, the jacket I am wearing is working well along with the pants but, my waterproof boots are not living up to their claim of being waterproof, a complete washout. I can feel small streams of cold water infiltrating my otherwise warm feet. It seems to be a bad day for my extremities today because my rain gloves seem to be leaking also. At least one big bright spot is my heated vest, it works like a champ keeping my torso nice and cozy warm. After about an hour I get to the town of Pine Bluff and fueled up and decided on McD for breakfast. While eating my regular burrito meal, I have a nice conversation with one of the workers there, Pam. She asks me where I am from and seems aghast that I could have ridden a motorcycle all the way from California. She says I have a great wife since she lets me travel and I agree. She is an interesting person in that she has 10 children, the youngest being 17. She buried one husband (probably due to exhaustion) and now seems to be having problems with the replacement. I try to encourage her and I wanted to pray with her but with her being a McD employee, that was not going to happen, so I gave her my phone number and said for her to give me a call. She said the Lord had sent me to encourage her but I left the restaurant with my spirits boosted because she had encouraged me. Consequently, the rain just didn't feel as bad or cold as it did before.



At Vicksburg



The Ironclad Cairo

Continuing on, the rain was still heavy but the sky seemed to be a bit lighter in the direction I was heading. Soon I came onto more flashing blue lights and this time it was some sort of tanker truck resting on its top. I quickly glanced and saw that the cab of the truck was pretty much intact so the driver was probably OK. Before long, the rain completely tapered off and the ride was getting a bit more enjoyable. This area is a river delta and loaded with crops, mainly cotton. Before long, I arrive in Vicksburg

which was a very strategic city during the Civil War. Vicksburg sits on the a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River and the Rebels were firing their cannon at ships they didn't cotton to, mainly ships laden with goods from the north. The situation was really impacting the North so Abe Lincoln sent Grant down there to take Vicksburg which he did. Along with a nice visitor's center, there is about 16 miles of parkway which winds around where the fighting took place. The earthen fortifications and trenches are still visible after all these years. One highlight in the park was the Union Ironclad ship, Cairo. It had been sunk by mines and in the 1960's found and raised and is on display. Sure some of the ship is gone or in

really bad shape but a remarkable amount is there to see. Inside the museum close by, are items retrieved during the raising including dinnerware, tools and medical instruments. It was all neat to see.

Before long it is time to ride, I think I would like to explore Vicksburg some more one of these days, there is a large museum that I would have liked to visit but I didn't have the time. After another hour and a half, I arrive at Hattiesburg, Mississippi and I notice that there is a Cracker Barrel there but I am losing my daylight and elect to press on to the Raymond B. Johnston State Park where I will heat up my can of Stagg Chili. The lake at the park is real nice and I learned that most of the improvements to it were done by German P.O.W's during WWII. When I arrived, I checked my phone and there was a message from Pat, the lady I had talked to in Pine Bluff. The message said she was praying for me, for safety, which was sure sweet of her.

Wednesday, October 28th, 2009



The Battleship Alabama

It was real foggy this morning when I got up and there had been a really heavy dew and most everything was wet. I packed up and hit the road heading toward Mobile, AL, on the coast. The fog was a riding companion for about 40 miles then it eventually cleared. As I entered the outskirts of Mobile, I spotted a Waffle House which is one of my favorite places to eat. I love the clatter and activity as they prepare the meal right in front of you, nothing hidden here. No funny business going on with your food in some back room. The breakfast was good and soon I was on my way to see the reason I came this way, the Battleship Alabama. I must admit that

the ship really didn't look that big when I arrived in the parking lot, but after spending time walking around it, it is massive. The tour was wonderful and you really feel like you saw most of everything there is to see. I was most impressed by the projectile storage below the big 16 inch guns. Below each of the large guns is a round, 10 or 12 inch thick cylinder which contains the projectiles, simply amazing to see. Equally amazing was the helm which was like the helm of a ship you have probably seen in movies. But behind this helm is another one contained in steel armor at least a foot thick. Instead of large windows to see out, there are just slits like one would find in a bunker. I was able to go into the turret of the big guns. What a horrible place that must have been to have as a duty station, so confined and blind to what is happening outside and I am sure the noise of the big guns must have been deafening. At the same site as the battleship is a nice collection of aircraft like the SR-71 and F-14 and several others. Some of the rarer planes in the collection were badly damage during hurricane Katrina and they still show their storm scars. Also on display is a large submarine, the USS Drum. It appears to be in just the same shape as when it was on duty and was very worthwhile and interesting to tour. After seeing all of this, it was time to head toward Pensacola, FL where the National Naval Aviation Museum is located. As it was, I arrived at 1600 and they close at 1700 and as soon as I got into the museum, I could see that I was going to need more time to see all they have. From an early Sikorsky flying boat bomber to the latest Navy fighter jet, they have it all and everything is wonderfully arranged. One of the docents, an old A-4 pilot took me under his wing so to speak and showed me some of the easily missed yet unusual aircraft. They have hanging from above, an L-7 the Birddog. This plane was designed as an observation plane for 2 people. During the fall of Saigon, the L-7 on display landed on the an aircraft carrier with 7 people aboard, a whole family. They have photos of the actual landing and this family's flight to freedom, amazing. With so much see, I decided to camp nearby and go back to the museum tomorrow. I camped at Big Lagoon State Park and shortly after getting my camp squared away when, like manna from heaven, my neighbor Jack, brought me a plate full of fries and a big juicy steak. Rounded out with an ice cold coke and that was dinner, no doubt better than the can of soup I was planning on, life is good.



This is the actual plane



Landing on the Aircraft Carrier

Thursday October 29th, 2009 Despite the chattering of local Raccoons, I had a good night's sleep but the sky looks ominous this morning so I quickly break camp and head for where else, Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart is really a great place because they have nearly everything. After picking up a few supplies, I did breakfast at the Waffle House and then went back to the National Naval Aviation Museum. What a great place with all sorts of interesting aircraft and other aviation related items. One plane, the NC-4 is a 4 engine flying boat all made of wood with a 129 ft wingspan. It was one of 4 that were built and they were attempting to fly across the Atlantic. 4 left and only one made it across the big pond and today it proudly sits in the Museum. Another great display was a PBY-Catalina. They had one hanging from the ceiling and the fuselage of another one below with portions of the skin removed so we could see how the aircraft was



PBY-Catalina

crewed. It was really interesting to me because when I was a first year firefighter, I worked at Ryan Field in Hemet and one of the airplanes we had stationed there was a Super Cat. On time I ask the pilot Sonny what the difference between a regular Cat and a Super Cat and he replied, "about 10 knots". Incidentally, when I knew Sonny back in 1969, he was the epitome of the professional pilot, black hair slicked back and mirrored aviator sunglasses. It would be years later, in fact 20 years later when I would see him again at the Chico Air Attack Base, he had given up flying tankers and was now flying

one of the Air Attack Cessna 337 Skymasters. What a shock because the years had not been kind to Sonny, he was a broken down old man. I heard stories of him "relieving himself out on the tarmac next to the plane after a long flight because he just couldn't make it to the base facilities. Back to the PBY, one night while left unsupervised at the Ryan Tanker Base, I grabbed a flashlight and gave myself an un-guided tour of Tanker-54. I remember how amazed I was at how large the inside of the plane was. When I lived in Paradise, there was a small auto parts shop on Pearson Rd. The owner was a veteran and during WWII, he was a PBY pilot and had been shot down 2 times and picked up a number of downed pilots during the course of his 1700 flight hours. I could go on about the heroics of PBY flight crews and how they saved the day by spotting the Japanese fleet which resulted in the battle of Midway, a much needed payback early in the war but you dear reader probably are not as interested in this kind of stuff, so I won't. Suffice it to say that I was like a kid in a candy store for a couple of hours this morning. At about noon, I figured I had seen most of what was available so I headed toward Tallahassee, FL, just over 200 miles away. The weather was nice but the scenery was pretty boring, just pine forests of tall but thin trees. I saw at least one tree that was probably 12 inches in diameter but most were much smaller. The pines looked like Ponderosa Pines but really worthless in my view. They were harvesting these small trees for wood pulp and I suppose it took 100 of them to make a truckload. For comparison, in the hills of Chico, on occasion, I have seen 3 log loads over the years. I had some supper and found a Starbucks where I fired off a quick email. I also called Dorothy Neill, wife of Gene Neill, I wanted to stop and see Gene but she said it would not work because Gene had most of his Colon removed about 3 months ago and she said he has been housebound ever since and was uncomfortable with visitors. It is too long a story to tell how I came to know Gene but he is the head of World Wide Prison Ministries.



My camp at the Perry KOA

Google him and send for one of his books which tells his amazing story of salvation. After that I found that there was a KOA campground in Perry, FL and I made haste to get there before dark. As it was, the last 30 miles were in the dark, something I try not to do. It's funny; my days are sort of like the game of musical chairs, scrambling to find a place before dark. Just as I neared the KOA, it started raining. At the campground, they have a nice porch and while the owner had stepped out for a while I stayed dry on their nice porch. While waiting, I spied a covered area with some picnic tables and just a

few minutes ago, the owner came back and said I could pitch my tent under the cover. It has stopped raining now but more could come. If you ever seen the movie: Cool Hand Luke, and remember the scene when it is hot yet raining hard outside, that is sort of like what it is here. It is still probably 70 degrees and for a while the rain was sheeting, it was coming down so hard. Well, time to make my bed for the night.

Friday, October 30th, 2009

Dawns early light came around 0630 and since I dreamed of robots taking control of our lives during my last period of sleep, I decided to get up. It was overcast but thankfully, not raining. I packed up as per the routine except for one thing, I threw out the extra large orange wool blanket since in this sweltering place they call Florida, I am sure I would not need it. Things were just too crowded with all the warm stuff I brought along. There was little ceremony as I chucked it into the dumpster, that blanket kind of smelled anyway. I thought about giving it to some sort of second hand store but really, who down here in their right mind would want it? I got on the road at around 0700, a new record. It is cool while I ride but in a warm kind of way. Riding along, I see my first palm tree and no, it didn't excite me. I rode from Perry to Cross City



Manatee Spring

specifically to the Manatee Springs State Park. What the attraction here is a hole where a small river starts by millions of gallons gushing to the surface from the aquifer below. The water is crystal clear and a constant 72 degrees. One man was doing some snorkeling and looking at the fish. I followed a wooden path that followed the new stream to where the stream flowed into the Suwannee River of song fame. Out at the end of the path was a welcoming committee of a sort, 30 or so vultures that had roosted there.

Instead of being intimidated by these carrion eaters, I rushed them, madman style and put them to flight. Most of them flew to some nearby trees but the more enthusiastic ones, instead went to work, searching for a thermal. My next stop was guess what, another spring. I love unusual geographic attractions. This one is called the Rainbow Spring and its output is about 3 times more that the Manatee Spring. The GPS took me to the wrong place and when it was over, I had gone probably 15 miles out of my way in a huge (square) circle. The Rainbow Spring was really big and the water was a beautiful turquoise color. It is also a swimming area



Rainbow Spring

and several people were enjoying the weather. The heavy overcast lifted and became clouds. The clouds here have a softer look to them sort of fog around the edges and the clouds are our friends because occasionally, the sun would poke through full force with notable intensity. Soon I was done looking at the water and more importantly, taking photos. I consulted Ouhla for the nearest Starbucks so I could make some reservations for camping near Key West and she said to go to Spring Hill. I found the SB and gathered the computer and maps and such and went inside, Target of all places and guess

what? No wifi. Ouhla Ouhla had let me down so I inquired of Ouhla again and this time she said: Port Richey, long story short I found it and made the required reservations. My destination for this evening is Myakka River State Park just east of Sarasota. It is really muggy here and the mosquitoes are hungry. While I am typing this, my face is all sweaty and I keep feeling little proboscis pricks on my back and occasionally on my bald head from the little devils. I am also getting agitated at my neighbor, he has the nerve to let his AC cycle on and off mocking me its just not fair. My campsite tomorrow night is next to the ocean and hopefully, a little cooler and no biting bugs. I am shutting down the computer and taking a cold shower and heading to the tent where I can savor the sweat without bugs.

Saturday, October 31, 2009

I has a good night's sleep because it finally cooled down enough that I had to have at least some of my body in the sleeping bag. Packed up and headed out with about 260 miles to ride today. Stopped at CB (Cracker Barrel) for breakfast and it was good. There was an attraction nearby some sort of gardens it had earned a star rating, so I thought I would take a look but about 5 miles out, I was distracted when I saw a large flea market. I thought I would stop and see if they had any snorkeling gear since I was going to some really good snorkeling areas. No luck with that but a lady there said the gardens were "not worth stopping" so I bypassed them. Before committing myself to the Everglades and the Keys road, I stopped at WM to pick up a few items one of which was a 25 foot long extension cord since most of the places I stay at have electricity. Now I don't have to pitch my tent right next to the electrical box in order to run the computer or portable DVD player. The old highway cuts right through the Everglades and soon it was just like what I had seen in the photos, marshland with Mangrove swamps and water with grass growing out of it. One thing I wanted to do down here was to go for an air boat ride and it didn't take long before I came across an outfit that was in the business. I plunked down my debit card and signed up for the next boat out which was 1/2 an hour away. Soon, it was time to go and I can see that for getting around the Everglade area, an airboat is the way to go. Very maneuverable and can handle the shallow area just fine, sometime we were just running through grass that grew out of the top of the water. The Mangrove plant is interesting; it



Air boating

builds stilts which hold the leafy part of the plant out of the salt water. Meanwhile, the sediment that comes in with the tide gets captured in the tangle of stilts and after many years, the result is solid ground. A plant that makes ground, only God could have come up with that one. We looked for an Alligator but were not able to find one. Our guide explained that because the rainy season had been so dry, the area which is usually fresh water was now inundated by salt water and the Alligators like the fresh so they

migrate a few miles northward. All in all, it was a very fun ride. I ask our guide where I could see an actual Alligator and he said about 7 miles up the road, there was a boardwalk with gators visible. Sure nough, there was 6 footer next to the roadway's bridge. There were some folks watching the Gator and fishing for fish to feed the gator with. Soon one of the men caught a fish and when it was de-hooked, the fish was dropped near the Gator's head. SNAP! The fish was history, those Gators really can move fast if they want. With a hundred miles left to go, I bid the Gator feeders adio but not until they prayed for my safety that was really nice. After riding past some of the Seminole villages where they still prefer thatch roofs and eventually, the road made a right turn. The character of the land changed and for the next several miles there were nurseries on both sides of the road growing palm trees of various kinds and even Banana plants. In Homeland, I stopped at McD for a mocha. I still had about 35 miles to Key Largo but wanted to rest my rear end and hydrate a bit. Containing on, I ride on to Key Largo where I am staying at the John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. The snorkeling here is supposed to be really good so tomorrow, I am planning on going out to the reef on a boat to take a peek. Like last night, it is sweaty warm and the skeeters are biting, glad my little tent is bug proof.



Ole Snapper

Sunday, November 1, 2009

I had a good night's sleep and woke up to a clear morning. At around 0800, I gathered my snorkeling gear and headed to the park concessionaire and bought tickets for the 0900 snorkel boat to Banana Reef. While waiting for the departure time, I ran into a couple that was sporting Jesus logo stuff on their shirts and I knew they were my kind of people. It was Bob and Ronda from Coeur d'Alene Idaho. I know Paul and Jenny Largemore that live there and I asked if they



Don't hate me because I am beautiful

knew them and they did, saw Jenny just a couple of weeks ago. Bob said they, Paul and Jenny had gone to their church, but no longer. Small world! I made the acquaintance also with Teresa and her son Anthony who was studying Marine Biology in high school. They had snorkeled on this reef before on this same boat and when it came to snorkel at the reef, I ask Teresa if I could hang with them since I had no dive buddy and they said it would be OK. My hunch of picking them paid off because their sharp eyes spotted things I didn't initially

see like a 7 ft wide “Eagle” Manta Ray which was fascinating to watch. Also a 6ft Blacked Tipped Reef Shark which swam right below me about six feet down. Corral and lots of pretty fish and a close up look at a Jellyfish, it was all wonderful. To soon our time to play was over and we headed back the 5 miles to the park. Back in camp I completed packing and hit the road stopping at SB to use the Wifi. After that, it was a really nice ride to my camp on Big Pine Key, the Bahai Honda State Park. After setting up the tent, I went out exploring and ended up walking a few hundred yards out on an old bridge, part of the old highway and a railroad before that. Out at the end there was something interesting going on, a local Cuban family was fishing off the bridge which was at least 80 ft above the water. They were using heavy lines and when there was a fish on the line, there was a lot of excitement and yelling, just what I like, free entertainment. I hung out with them for about an hour waiting for sunset and enjoying the show and watching the sharks cruising below and other assorted water creatures like a giant Sea Turtle and another big Ray.



The bridge where the Cuban family fished

After sunset, I headed back to camp and dined on Mac & Cheese with added tuna, not as bad as it sounds (when you’re hungry). It might be a degree cooler than last night but like last night the skeeters are biting. Tomorrow I am heading into Key West and I have made reservations for Tuesday for the ferry to the Dry Tortugas where there is Fort Jefferson, the place where Dr. Samuel Alexander Mudd the 1st, of the Lincoln Assassination fame was imprisoned. Some of you will recall the motherly warning, “you do, and your name will be Mudd”. Well, it is cooling off a bit, I think I will take a cold shower and retire to my bug free tent.

Monday, November 2, 2009



My hand lifting a gold bar

Woke up and fixed myself some coffee and polished off the last 2 packages of powered mini doughnuts, there are only 4 mini doughnuts in each package so I am not as big a pig as it might sound. I also made a package of oatmeal so I would have something that would stick to my ribs. I headed to Key West via the Post Office where I mailed some extra things back to home since I need all the room I can get. I arrived in Key West and my first stop of interest was The Mel Fisher Treasure Museum. Long

story short, Mel was one of the many treasure hunters that really hit it big, gold and silver bars and a ton of coins. Of course the State of Florida laid claim to everything he had found and confiscated all the booty. Lawsuits flew and eventually the US Supreme Court heard the case and the treasure hunter actually won when the court became convinced the treasure was recovered from an area outside U.S. territory. Of course the whole debacle took 7 years. It was really interesting to see the treasure on display and hear about how everything took place. The best was actually getting to lift a gold bar, very cool. It was contained in a plastic square box in such a way so it, the gold bar was going nowhere but I could reach in and grab it and lift it, it was heavy just like you would think. I took a sashay through the treasure jewelry store admiring some of the haul that available for purchase. Several of the items were nearly a quarter of a



million dollars each, even the cheap stuff was expensive. Of course it would be neat to have a piece of Spanish treasure from the 1600's but really, what would it be good for? I thought about what the Word of God says about treasure and resisted the temptation to purchase, it wasn't difficult. Next I went to the local Museum which was located in a rather ornate 4 story brick building that was once the Customs House. The doors and window trim was amazing, built during a time when the government built structures one could be proud of. The items on exhibit were

lackluster with several of the exhibit room closed due to construction. I did watch part of a video about the life of Hemmingway. Tragic. He had a massive library and apparently, enjoyed reading. Too bad he didn't read with understanding the Book of Books, the Bible. He could have laid up some treasure of his own and probably enjoyed life instead of taking his own life. Next I did some walking downtown and I had plenty of company since there were 2 cruise ships docked in town. I found an Oyster Bar and had lunch, a "Cracked Conch Sandwich". I had once saw an episode of Globe Trekker on public TV and the trekker had a sample of Conch freshly killed and she said it was good and sweet so since then, I wanted to try Conch. Instead of fresh and raw, mine was battered and deep fried. Conch does not have much of a flavor, it reminded



me of Abalone but more chewy but not rubbery or squeaky chewy like deep fried Octopus. Let's face the fact, food texture is important, almost as important as flavor. Next I went to the fort that once guarded this outpost: Fort Zachary Taylor. At one time this was a 3 story fort shaped like a triangle. Eventually with the development of artillery that had longer range and better accuracy, the fort was modified by removing two of the stories and that is the way it is today. Sadly, there was an iron shortage for some reason and this monolithic fort is seriously

crumbling with large looming cracks and displaced areas. After the fort I walked over to the beach nearby on the Atlantic side, it was a lovely beach so I conscripted some folks from Jersey to watch my stuff for me, as I did a bit of snorkeling. Not as much to look at as the reef a couple of days ago but I saw a few nicely colored fish and a school of about 50 or so little fish. I had been hydrating all day long but was still thirsty so I got a large ice tea and just enjoyed the lovely beach and turquoise water. After that, I rode back to camp and showered and laid down to take a bit of a nap. Soon the phone rang and Kathleen advised me of a leak in the toilet supply upstairs in the guest room. She discovered it when she was downstairs and felt a drip. I had her turn off the toilet supply and punch some holes in the ceiling downstairs to drain what may have accumulated between the floors. Sure glad Kat had found the leak when she did, in the house I built, I had the outside water separate from the house water and so we were able to shut off the water to the house when we were on trips. I can't do that with this house, if I shut off the water, Kathleen's dad is out also. I am happy to report that it is noticeably cooler this evening, even the mis-skeeters seem to be taking the night off, maybe a Hurricane is coming. One thing I wanted to mention is that the ride out here just was not as monotonous as I expected. I thought some of the bridges would stretch for miles upon miles but that was not the case. Lots of bridges to be sure but lots of Keys all connected together and several of the Keys are their own towns. Not too bad at all.

Tuesday, November 3rd, 2009



Fort Jefferson on the Dry Tortugas

Ah, what a wonderful day today. I got up at 0600 and got ready and on the road to Key West. With the recon I had done yesterday, it was easy to get to where the boat would take me to Fort Jefferson on the Dry Tortugas. We boarded at 0800 and were treated to a nice continental breakfast while the crew made final preparations. The boat is a Catamaran with a cruising speed of about 32 mph. This boat seems pretty well suited to this area with plenty of room for the passengers and a very shallow

draft. I found a spot in the area up front, next to the bridge but I wasn't there alone for long. A

nice couple a little older than me sat with me and provided me good company. They are from Canada and had flown down to spend a few days at Key West. The previous day they went out on a SCUBA boat and did some diving near the place where I took the snorkel boat a few days ago. The ride to Fort Jefferson took about two hours and 20 minutes being about 70 miles out from Key West. During the crossing, we passed over one of the Mel Fisher treasure ships, the depth of the water was only 20ft. Our captain said he really didn't have much respect for the late Mel Fisher. He said he ran into him in a bar and Fisher, drunk, pulled out a bag containing large and beautiful rubies and on another occasion, Fisher, drunk again pulled out of his pocket a gold boatswain's whistle to show it off. It sounds that instead of Mr. Fisher owning the

treasure, it owned him, sad. The fort came into view and it is an impressive and imposing



structure. The fort was under construction for about 30 years starting in 1846 through 1875. It was a Union fort and upon the start of the Civil War, a lone Confederate ship came next to the fort and demanded they surrender. They were told to leave at once or they would be “blasted out of the water”. The funny thing was at the time, there were no cannon at the fort so it was only a bluff, and it worked. Hard time were upon the fort during the Civil War because all there materials and foodstuffs had to come from up north, a voyage of about 16 days. After the civil

war, the fort did extra duty as a prison to hold the conspirators that were accused of helping John W. Booth in the assassination of President Lincoln. One was Dr. Samuel Mudd, the doctor which helped Booth by setting his broken leg. Mudd arrived at the fort in July 1865 and was later pardoned by President Andrew Jackson in 1869, mainly because of Mudd’s help during a Yellow Fever epidemic while he was imprisoned. The sign said that 16 million bricks were used in the construction. One thing I found interesting was that they had a coal fired furnace in which to heat the cannon balls red hot. They would be taken out of the furnace and loaded and fired at a ship. The idea was to set fire to the ship and destroy it in that manner. Did it work? Not at Fort Jefferson since nary was a cannon shot ever made in anger there.

I walked around the fort along the moat wall and walked around half of the fort on the roof; it was all very fascinating to me. Lunch was served around noon and then I went snorkeling for about an hour. After snorkeling on a reef and seeing all the fish there, the area around the fort was a bit lack luster. Soon it was time to go and I rejoined Don and Miriam for the ride back to Key West. Having a nice conversation certainly makes the time go fast and before I knew it, we were back in port. After a quick Taco Bell stop, I headed back to camp. It had been a great day and the fort exceeded my expectations. Tomorrow, I head back north toward Jacksonville.

Wednesday, November 4th, 2009



Morning sky on my ride out of the Keys

I had a good night’s rest and found the skies to be cloudy. Fearing that it might rain soon I packed up faster than usual. I was on the road and enjoyed the sunrise with towering thunderstorms scattered about. The road ahead looked like rain but I made it to McD just before the downpour hit. The way it was raining, I figure it would only take a couple of seconds of exposure to the rain to be completely soaked. The only problem was that I entered McD without my raingear so unless I planned my get

a way carefully, I would get soaked. Ah, a lull in the rain and I can see a bit of blue sky overhead, should I go for it? As I watched the rain slacken for a couple of minutes I balked at going for some reason and about a minute later, a deluge hit. The next time the rain tapered off, I made it to the bike and got all my gear on in a slight misty drizzle. My good fortune would not last long however as up ahead, it was raining hard. I tucked down behind the windshield and slowed down a bit. After about 10 minutes, I was on the other side of the storm and things looked dry on up ahead, so I stopped and took off the rain gear. I made it to Homestead and stopped at the visitors center, mainly use their bathroom, but, while I was there, I asked about what there was to do around the area and the lady volunteer said that I needed to go and see



The Everglades

the Everglades National Park so I did. A fresh water river of grass is what the real Everglades is, not a swamp like I thought. I went for a couple of hikes and saw lots of birds, fish and a small Alligator. Was it as exciting as the lady said, not for me but I was still glad I went since I was close by and it didn't cost me anything since I had paid NP fees for Fort Jefferson and that was good for entry into any National Park for a Week. On the way back to Homestead, I stopped at a produce market where they made

fruit shakes. I had Key Lime and Strawberry and it was a delicious combination. They had some

avocados that were round like a softball, strange. Back on the road, I turned onto a turnpike and paid the toll of two dollars. This was like the turnpike from Hell because about every 8 to 10 miles, they wanted more money and there were 8 stops. The fee for a car was \$1.00 but I had to pay \$2.00 because I had a trailer. Wow. I rode to SB in West Palm Beach and did some emails and stopped to see Meredith from Ed Hill Travel. Meredith and her husband, Richard were the tour guides on the trip to Israel that Evan and I took about 4 years ago. She was sure surprised to see me but I made the visit short because it was almost quitting time for her and being a travel agent, she is pretty busy. My camping spot was supposed to be a State Park but when I got to where the GPS said, the gate was closed and it looked like the campground was out of business. With about an hour left until dark, I was at a loss of what to do so I stopped at a Martin County Fire Station 33 and ask if they knew where an RV place that allowed tent camping was nearby. With that, they invited me to camp behind their station which is what I did. They said I could take a shower which I will a little closer to bedtime. Pretty nice, the brotherhood of Firefighters. I called my cousin, Wayne, my Mom's sister's son who lives about 160 miles north of here. I am going to stop and visit him tomorrow morning.

Thursday, November 5th, 2009

It rained most of the night but I was dry inside my little tent. I woke about 0600 and was glad to see the rain tapering off. I got packed and cringed when rolling up my soaking wet tent. I said bye to my firefighting friends and headed north through scattered rain showers. I stopped at

McD for a small breakfast and coffee and continued on toward New Smyrna Beach where Wayne, my cousin lives. When I exited the freeway to call Wayne to let him know I was coming, I made an inspection of my rear tire and saw that for the most part, there was no tread left. I



My cousin Wayne Coulon and me

headed toward the closest Harley dealer which was in Smyrna and fearful that they would take advantage of a traveler, I decided to call them on the phone for an out the door price on a new rear tire, installed. The quote was \$230.00 and feeling that this was a fair price asked when I could get in. They said the work could be done the first thing in the afternoon. I went to Wayne's house and got re-acquainted then took out my tent and the other damp articles and put them out to dry. Soon it was time to take the Harley to the shop and I followed Wayne as he led me there using his shortcut. After dropping off the bike, Wayne

took me to Blue Spring, another of the neat gushing springs the Florida has. The spring was really nice and the water flowed out of a cave and according to the sign, it flowed one hundred million gallons per day. We walked along a boardwalk looking for wildlife including maybe a Manatee but, none were found. After, we stopped and got the bike and I bought the mandatory Harley dealer tee shirt. When we got home, Walt's x-wife, Laurel arrived and soon we went out to dinner at McKinna's sports bar. It was a nice place and I had fish and small round potatoes which was delicious. After we went home and watched TV, showered and went to bed around 10. It had been a long day and I was real tired.

Friday, November 6th, 2009

I had a good night's sleep and felt refreshed. After enjoying a couple of cups of coffee, we went



Waiting for our boat ride

to a place named Rocci's Diner where I had French Croissants and a slab of ham, like French Toast but with croissants instead of toast, they were good. Afterward, we went for a guided boat ride on Spruce Creek, Wayne and me were the only boaters on the tour so we had a Captain and a guide for our own personal tour on the nice pontoon boat. The ride was pleasant and we saw turtles and various birds but no Manatees or Alligators. At the end of the ride, the Captain gave us a demonstration of cracking

the horse whip. He was really good and the whip cracked very loud. After that, we drove to the

ruins of an old sugar mill. The sugar cane industry was pretty short mainly because the Seminole Indians would raid the mill and destroy and burn anything they could, often being helped by some of the slaves that worked the mills. Another problem finally sounded the death knell for the sugar industry; it was crop failure for three years in a row. After spending time exploring the ruins and surrounding garden, we drove to the Ponce de León Lighthouse. This was really neat. The lighthouse itself is 175 ft high and I was able to climb it and spend some time on the platform which afforded a good view. Also on the grounds were the Light keeper's home and several other support buildings. One building contained a nice collection of Fresnel Lenses used in lighthouses. One of them, a First Order lens, along with the machinery for rotation the lens weighed more than 6 tons. They had a couple of homemade boats, one lined with canvas, that were used by Cubans escaping Castro's Cuba. One of the boats was more like a raft made of inner tubes. We stopped for a short look at a bird hospital and discovery center where injured birds were nursed back to life. There were neat birds recuperating there



Ponce de León Lighthouse

including two large Bald Eagles. Soon it was time to go home and after a bit, we went out to a Bar-b-que place named, Dustin's. It was good, I had a BBQ beef sandwich and beans, not too much, I need to maintain my girlish figure. Well it is almost 2200 hrs and I am feeling pretty tired so off to bed I go. Tonight I made reservations for a Sunday flight out of Daytona Airport that will get me home before 1500 hrs. Tomorrow I will need to store the bike and trailer and decide what to carry home.

Saturday, November 7th 2009

The day started early when at 0645, I heard my name being called and something about a fire, no fire though, it was just my cousin's try at a little morning humor. What was really going on was that his daughter, Laura had called and wanted to meet us for breakfast. So up I was and we drove about 15 minutes to a little diner called the Coffee Stop. I had French toast and a slab of ham and of course, coffee.

It was all very good. After, we went to a local storage place and I was shocked to learn that they wanted \$70.00 a month for a space just large enough for the Harley. I decided to call around and see if there was something cheaper. I was not having much luck having any of the storage places answer my call and while still working on it, Wayne came in and said he had a great idea. Out at his place, he has a storage building that he is not using and he said we could move a few things and my bike and trailer would both fit so we went out to his place and made some



space which took to two of us about 3 minutes. The tricky part would be to move the bike up the ramp because the door is about 1.5 ft off the ground. After, I went through my stuff and got organized and took the bike and trailer down to the local self serve car wash and cleaned them up. On the way back, I stopped at a Dairy Queen that was real retro. The restaurant had been at the location since I was 2 years old so it was really neat. They had all beef hot dogs for 89 cents, their regular price so I had 2. I returned to the house

and took a nap and shortly we will take the bike to where it will be stored for the winter. I have plane tickets and my flight home leaves tomorrow morning at 0630 and it will be real nice to get home. Wayne came home and we took the Harley to his place and went up the ramp with the trailer, then the bike. Thankfully, the trip up the ramp went easier than I thought it would be. Well, one more sleep and an early wake up, then, three flights to get home. Daytona to Charlotte to Phoenix to Sacramento should be fun.

Sunday, November 8th, 2009



Wayne's daughter Laura and Boyfriend

I set my phone alarm for 0415 but I heard my name being called by Wayne before that, at about 5 after 0400. Getting ready was real easy since I had everything ready to go the night before. Of course my hair would not cooperate and I had to rake the hot wash rag over my mainly bald head a second time. Wayne took me to the Daytona Beach Airport through non-existent traffic. The airport is nice although pretty small. On the flight to Charlotte, I saw a situation where I could help. The man across from me had a very large seatmate in the small plane and I could tell from his body language, that his space was hindered. I was sitting across the aisle and I had an empty seat next to me so when the door of the plane closed, I offered the empty seat to him and he said he really appreciated it, I think the large man probably appreciated it also. My new seatmate's name was Dan from New Jersey and he was in town finishing his Masters degree in aeronautical safety in the Daytona

Beach.

Dan is also a commercial pilot and an officer in the Coast Guard. He sure has a lot of accomplishments for being a young man and we talked a lot during the short flight about aircraft and bicycling since he is a road rider. He was interested in learning more about the mopeds I have built, so I gave him my card and a Herald Times tract. My next flight was about 4 hours from Charlotte to Phoenix and I sat between folks going to Sacramento and the Bay area for work related activities. We had a bit of small talk but the lady next to the window came with a neck pillow and she was going to try to sleep. She may have rested a bit but sleep eluded her because the road in the sky our pilot flew was filled with pot holes. Upon disembarking, I playfully accused the pilot who was standing there of jerking the controls and he laughingly added "the whole way". So I have about 2 hours for my next and final flight so what could be better than to catch up the journal.

My flight from Phoenix to

Sacramento went real fast because my seatmates, a couple of from Granite Bay, near Roseville. They have children still at home and we had a lot of fun comparing notes on the trials and tribulations of parenthood. My flight arrived on time and to my amazement, my bag actually followed me through the three flights. Soon Kathleen, Evan and Bert arrived and it was a long anticipated, sweet reunion. I feel especially blessed to be able to travel. This trip so far has taken me through 9 states and 4,850 miles. Our country is blessed with a great variety of people and landscapes and how enjoyable it has been to meet people and travel as I have and I thank the Lord for all of this. All of this would not be possible if I did not have a wonderful, hard working and thoughtful, completely trust worthy wife, Kathleen. Kathleen, thanks for all you are and for letting me go, what a blessing you are to me, I love you!



Wayne and his X-wife Laurel