

Subj: **Brian & Gert head around the Northwest - I**
Date: 5/18/2007 10:00:59 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: [BrianLaine](#)
To: [Majava500](#), [emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net](#), [RachelC246](#), [Ole1975](#), [lkind@foxinternet.com](#),
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[ReanLaine](#), [Fritz.Drach@fredmeyer.com](#)
BCC: [BrianLaine](#)

Hello all,

Just thought I'd give you an update on the trip.

Gert and I headed out Monday, first destination being Portland to visit with Mom. The sun is finally shining, so this long-scheduled trip was at the right time (so far). On the way down, I stopped for a break at a weigh station along the Columbia River highway. I pulled on the scales just for fun, and discovered that Gert, luggage and I weighed 900 pounds, more than I would have expected. I have it figured out though. Gert: 625 lbs. Laptop: 50 lbs. Underwear: 75 lbs. Misc luggage: 50 lbs., and then me. I might have estimated a little high on the luggage, it couldn't be me, could it? Actually, I have been packing a little more over time, such as a real glass to enhance the evening libation rather than plastic cups that commoners use.

After a few puffs on a cigar, I'd been at the weigh station five or ten minutes. A cop rolled in and was eyeing me. I walked over to see if I shouldn't be at the weigh station. He said that was no problem, but he had a report of a motorcycle at excessive speed eight minutes ago, how long had I been here? Well, I hadn't seen any other motorcycles, but I don't remember excessive speeding. I might have inadvertently been going a little fast, but it would sure be frustrating to get a ticket without the satisfaction of knowingly being an outlaw.

After a nice visit with Mom, on Wednesday I headed south to Klamath Falls to meet my old Navy Chief buddy Daryl. Chief Mike told me it was OK to be reassigned to Chief Daryl on TAD duty, I'd be OK. Daryl, 69 years old now, was waiting at our predetermined hotel, looking good, riding his Kawasaki Mean Streak cruiser.



On the way to Klamath Falls, I ran into this neat trailer. It's a camping trailer made to hook behind a Jeep for all-terrain camping. Made in Eugene, it has all sorts of neat features: tongue has receiver at trailer side too, long wheel travel, Optima battery that can go upside down, etc. Neat concept:



Daryl and I discussed where to go after looking at the weather here and there. Looking a little hot down south, a little rainy east, but eastern Oregon was looking good. So we headed to Burns Oregon for Thursday night. The scenery was great thus far, headed out from Eugene, past Clark's old digs on Fish Hatch Road in Oakridge, then over Willamete pass into Klamath Falls. From Klamath Falls more beautiful scenery through the mountains then into range county.

I think this should be the orthodontia poster child:



Today, we headed from Burns to Baker city, a whole 170 miles. We have a theory that even though we are up at six AM, we should wait until much later to get started so as to avoid the hazards of deer. Well, maybe it's not six AM.

In Seneca, we stopped for some coffee and started chatting with a guy who was interested in bikes. Quite the character. First showed us his bobcats. This is the 30 lb one (the male) and the 60 lb one (the female) :



As you might guess, that's a big water bowl in the middle. Chris, you should learn about the bobcat world where the 30 lb male rules the 60 lb female. Why is it that for most humans, the male with twice the weight gets lead around by the female?

Anyway, JW is big into bikes, has a Buell Olysses, Ducati 999, BMWs and others, plus a Harley that has a number of drag records (9.7 sec on gas with no wheelie bar) and has been on the cover of two magazines for it's appearance (it's street legal too). He's also rebuilding a lodge in town that was owned by the Hines lumber company. I wonder if Dad engineered any of the water systems around here? Another lady was there when he was showing us around, and noticed a bandstand in the lodge lobby. Turns out that he's a musician who toured with Crosby Nash and Young. His Dad was one of the Sons of the Pioneers. Very interesting guy. He's cut an album himself, and gave us a private concert of a new song he just wrote:



He has electronics that can take the guitar notes and convert them to about any other instrument, which comes out of the speakers. Imagine after a long night of drinking seeing a guy play a guitar and hearing saxophone music. Anyway, a nice way to while away a few hours with this interesting guy in the middle of the day. His name is JW Everitt.

Tonight we made it to Baker City. We're staying at the same hotel as last time through here. Last year the old Asian woman at the desk said that there might be some blonds left in our room from the last night. We told her we came back to see if they were here now. She said maybe, but they might be brunettes. Is that OK? The other gal at the desk muttered that probably anything that breathes would be OK.

No telling where tomorrow will lead us, but the weather is looking OK the Coeur d 'Aline area so maybe we will go that way. I'll give you an update later.

Brian/Dad

See what's free at AOL.com.

Subj: **Brian & Gert head around the Northwest - II**
Date: 5/21/2007 6:21:03 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: [BrianLaine](#)
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Hello all,

Some more Brian and Gert ramblings here, should you be hopelessly bored.

After leaving Baker City Saturday morning, we headed north along eastern Oregon, finding some very nice roads and avoiding traffic. A lot of nice scenery like this:



This was taken on the road heading over the mountain and down into Hell's Canyon. This is a great time of the year to see this part of the state, as it's still nice and green. It did get a bit brisk at the higher elevations. Along the way we also went through some small towns:



In the evening, we rolled into Lewiston Idaho, and shortly thereafter a few drops started to fall from the sky. With my careful hotel selection (look for billboards that say "weekly rates") we found a room that wasn't exactly fancy. I think the mirrors on our bikes were worth more than the average car in the parking lot, and there looked like some "deals" going on in the parking lot and a whiff of propane in the air. In the morning, as we walked to breakfast we found a spent 45 cartridge on the sidewalk.

Daryl pointed out that Clarkston and Lewiston are right next to one another. It never occurred to me about the Lewis and Clark connection.

Sunday morning, we looked out the window and found out that our weather luck had run out -- it was cold and rainy. We headed north nevertheless, and pretty soon it was pouring down, 45 degrees, and windy. Along the way we had to keep reminding ourselves how much fun we were having. The warmth of the hotel room is really appreciated tonight. The long range forecast does look better though, and we have weak excuse for a destination in Canada. I'll let you know if we make it there. We made it to Coleville Washington, which is a nice town in the hills, about fifty miles in from the east and north borders of Washington. The rain started to diminish at the end of the day. If any of you car guys need a "project," there are a lot of fields filled with old cars along highway 231 and 395 between Spokane and Coleville.

Gert continues to hum along, albeit very dirty. We're getting slightly above 50 MPG. The only change I've done since last summer is the addition of some tire valve caps that monitor pressure, and start flashing if the pressure drops more than 4 PSI from their set-point. This is established by putting on the caps with the correct tire pressure when they are first installed. The only bad part is that when I had new tires installed, I'm sure Heinz at the BMW shop carefully balanced the tires to .1 gram with German precision, then you screw on these three pound wonders.

Monday morning there was sun in the sky! Although we could see some clouds coming our way. We got all our stuff packed on the bikes, and Daryl made it about thirty feet before his bike came to a complete stop. No electrical power anywhere. Since it was electrical, we figured we were lucky to be a couple of obsolete geeks, not that we had any electrical test equipment. So we tore it down:



We found that it was simply a loose battery connection and soon were on the road again. The GPS sent us up some great back roads, up past Roosevelt lake and into Canada. The weather cooperated for a very pleasant ride. In the low sixties.

Speaking of the GPS, I set it to plan routes via "shortest route" in place of "quickest route" and that was very helpful in finding some improved biking roads. Although one time it sent us down a gravel road, which we declined and back-tracked. And another time it asked me to turn left into a wheat field. That may have been the shortest route, but it would better if you were driving a tractor.

As the day went on, the weather deteriorated. Soon it was raining and cooling off. As we climbed into the mountains (after the "pass open" sign), it got colder and colder. Soon it was raining and 39 degrees:



Yes, that's snow in the background. Thank heavens for the rain-suit and electric grips and vest. Oh-so nice at times like this.

We rolled into Cranbrook BC tonight, and the warm, dry hotel room is much appreciated. The nightly libation will be especially good tonight. Don't know what's next. We just look at a perimeter of a couple hundred miles, and see which way the weather looks best.

I'll let you know where that takes us as I find out. Hope all is well with you.

Until later,

Brian/Dad

See what's free at AOL.com.

Subj: **Brian & Gert head around the Northwest - III**
Date: 5/24/2007 7:06:13 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: [BrianLaine](#)
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Friends and family,

Look out, more junk mail here.

Well, after leaving Cranbrook, we headed further north into Canada and made our target destination. We went to Longview Alberta (just south of Calgary) and went to Ian Tyson's Navajo Mug Cafe for a late lunch. This is the Ian of Ian and Sylvia fame:



The trip north was through some beautiful country. This is definitely ranch country. For example we ran across this couple riding down a road on their ranch:



You can see by the background how pretty this country is. These are real cowboys. I was tempted to ask him if he got his saddlebags at a Harley shop.

The weather hasn't been wonderful. Another cold day with frequent showers, a lot of wind, and maybe getting up to 50 degrees. Well, however uncomfortable it is sometimes, many of the hours are still fun, and it is a break from the rigors of retired life. The people really move on the roads here. If you go slower than about 70, cars and trucks back up behind you. That's fine in the dry, but a little uncomfortable in the rain.

We ended up in Claresholm Alberta tonight, about 80 miles south of Calgary.

Some of you might think that I have a speck of intellect, but I can assure you that this isn't the case. Who would head out on the first non-rainy day of the year, go south 500 miles, then decide that it might be too warm further south, so ride 800 miles north into the cold and rain, then ride over the Rockies? Certainly no one with anything more than the intelligence of a rock.

Wednesday: Things are looking up! We left Claresholm this morning, heading south with the thought that the weather would be generally better that way. We drove through a lot of beautiful country skirting the east side of the Rockies, this might be typical:



The GPS did a great job of finding roads with little traffic, yet in the right general direction. As the day went on, the sun came out and temperatures raised into the 60s. Ah, now I remember why I love to ride.

I appreciate the spirit of people in Montana. Two-lane back roads are posted at 70 MPH, and people are left to their own judgement to decide how fast is safe. Also, no sissy 20 MPH school zones for these folks!



We made it down to Helena Montana tonight. No telling where next. I've gone about 2200 miles on this trip thus far and am only about 700 miles from home. South, then north, then south again. Zig zag touring. In a fit of irrational exuberance in the sun we cleaned up the bikes so they are back to their original beauty.

Thursday: Time to think about what to do next. After poking around the internet, we discover that the only bunch of smiley suns are in Idaho. Weather forecast here for the day is overcast, 40% chance of rain, thundershowers. In spite of that, and the 6900 foot pass between here and there, we decide to go for it.

About five minutes after leaving, it starts to rain, undoing our cleaning of last night. It doesn't last too long though, and persists off and on during the day in light amounts. Gets plenty cold over the pass though. However, it is accompanied by nice scenery along the way:



Tonight we rolled into Pocatello Idaho. Ah, dry and into the mid sixties. We're back on the home side of the Rockies. The forecast looks good for a few days here. Don't know where we will head next, going to have to spend a little more time with the weather sites. I'll let you know. Sorry.

Regards,

Brian/Dad

See what's free at AOL.com.

Subj: **Brian & Gert head around the Northwest - Epilog**
Date: 5/27/2007 12:06:28 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: [BrianLaine](#)
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Hello -

You can be relieved that the subject says epilog.

Friday - After looking around on the internet last night, we discovered that a lot of the hotels are filling up. An artifact of the Memorial Day weekend. We found one and reserved it, but all of a sudden in-season prices are in effect too. Between that and gas prices, the ante for each day on the road is going up. Who ever thought you could put twenty bucks worth of gas in a motorcycle? Thank heavens for the trip average of 48.5 MPG.

We headed out through Idaho, Utah and into Wyoming, with our destination being Evanston Wyoming. Nice warm weather, no rain, but there were pretty consistent 30 MPH winds for the entire day, coming from our right. The down side is that it's a little uncomfortable ("please, don't let a gust blow me into oncoming traffic"), but the upside is that it helps with tire life as you ride down road at an angle, saving that precious tread in the middle of the tire.

I saw a first as we left Pocatello this morning. A Harley rider was chatting on his cell phone as he rode through town. I can't imagine what he was going to do if he had to slow down, throw the cell phone so he could use the clutch? Using a cell phone is sort of possible here since a lot of these states don't have helmet laws.

Saturday - It turns out that there was a big bike event in Evanston, that probably didn't help the hotel situation. We decided not to investigate further though since it seemed like almost all the bikes around are Harleys. And I don't know about going to the event beer garden while riding.

When checking out of the hotel, I found that the rates were about \$15/night cheaper than the internet price we had received. The clerk told me that this is often the case, the internet sites add on their commissions and the hotel gets list price. Their recommendation was to use sites like Expedia to find hotels and room availability, but then to call the hotel (or use their internet site) for the actual booking. Interesting.

Speaking of hotels, at the Motel 6, our non-smoking room was equipped with an ashtray that said "no smoking." Evidently the message is you shouldn't smoke, but if you have to...

It seemed like time to start heading home, so Saturday morning we bid our adieus and I started heading northwest and Daryl southwest. The trek for me was from Wyoming, into Utah, then Idaho, Oregon and finally Washington. I was making good time by late afternoon, so decided to bonstai it all the way home. I arrived at about eleven PM after five states and 950 miles in a day. Surprisingly enough, while it was nice to get off at home, I easily could have traveled on. A comfy bike and states with 75 MPH speed limits make long days like this possible. Although going over the Cascade pass in the wind and dark got a little cool at times, so speeds went down at the end. After almost two weeks on the road, it's really nice to be home.

Gert rolled over the 30k mile mark shortly before I got home. Between Gert and my other bikes, I think I've traveled more miles on two wheels than on four wheels for the last two or three years. Life is good!

Until the next time Gert grabs me and hauls me away...

Regards,

Brian/Dad

See what's free at [AOL.com](#).