

Subj: **Brian and Gertrude Head East (1)**  
Date: 8/24/2006 7:43:51 PM Pacific Standard Time  
From: [BrianLaine](#)  
To: [fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com](mailto:fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com), [chances\\_grandpa@verizon.net](mailto:chances_grandpa@verizon.net), [Manningdesign](#), [dwh@hughes.net](mailto:dwh@hughes.net), [Majava500](#), [XRBen](#), [emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net](mailto:emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net), [RachelC246](#), [Ole1975](#), [ReanLaine](#), [lkind@foxinternet.com](mailto:lkind@foxinternet.com), [shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net), [MarkLaine](#), [stingray@foxinternet.com](mailto:stingray@foxinternet.com), [jasperbay@rockisland.com](mailto:jasperbay@rockisland.com), [darmar59@yahoo.com](mailto:darmar59@yahoo.com)

Hello -

Time to set Gert into your spam filter to keep from getting this annoying email -- I'm on the road again.

Every time I went out to the patio to enjoy a cigar recently, Gert was whispering to me, "Hey Brian, let's go somewhere -- summer isn't going to last forever." So finally I listened and decided to go somewhere. After 28 years of being married to Chris, I've learned that there's no hope in getting around the wishes of a German woman. Of course once I told Gert we could go somewhere, she insisted that we start out on Hwy 20, one of her favorites.

So we headed out Hwy 20 (North Cascades) and then north into Canada. Once in Canada, we headed east on Hwy 3. I've always felt guilty telling the border guards that I don't have any liquor or tobacco, so I looked it up. Turns out you can have 1.1 liter of booze, and 50 cigars or 200 cigarettes. Of course that leads to the question of how many cigarillos you can have. My theory is 125, but a border guard might question that theory, so once again I said no liquor and no cigarettes. It's easy to figure how much booze to take since the little Jack Daniels bottles I take are 50 ml each. Kind of nice to designate it that way, it's more like a prescription. RX: Administer two 50 ml doses each evening.

I still enjoy Canada a lot, seems like less people here, it is a little more relaxed, and better drivers in general. And having the speed limit in km/h gives you lots of practice in multiplying by .6 as you drive along. Also handy is that when they mark a corner in km/h, on a good bike or car, you can generally enjoy taking it in the same number of mph (e.g., if it says 70 km/h, 70 mph is about right).

Anyway, great cruising, light traffic. Ended up tonight in Castlegar BC, fairly east in BC, roughly north of Spokane. Same roads so far as a previous trip so I won't bore you with the same commentary or pictures. I found that when a motel says "Super 8," the 8 has nothing at all to do with the price, except some number to the eighth power, or maybe they want pieces of eight. Nice place though. Ran into five guys from Seattle, on their way back. One BMW and four Harleys. They have been to Jasper and Banff, rained on most of the way. One of the guys is riding a '48 pan-head with hand shift. You have to give him credit for being so adventuresome, oil is just running out underneath it in the parking lot. Hope he makes it back. Since Mark is on a cruise the same area, I asked them if they had seen a group of Cobras. Sure enough they did, about eleven that day. He said it wasn't raining at that moment, but he's sure the Cobras didn't stay dry -- sorry Mark!

I'm still thoroughly enjoying Gert. Like most BMW products, she probably isn't the best at anything, but is very good at everything. Great all-around bike. We've had about 16,000 miles of bonding so far between this summer and last summer.

I still don't know where we are going, just thought it would be fun to go east for a while, we've been to all of the western states and provinces. I like that you can't be lost this way, since you don't know where you are going.

Here it is the next night, and I'm in Medicine Hat Alberta. That's north of central Montana, almost to the Saskatchewan border.

Had a very nice ride today, the weather was about perfect, and Hwy 3 makes a beautiful ride or drive over the Rockies.

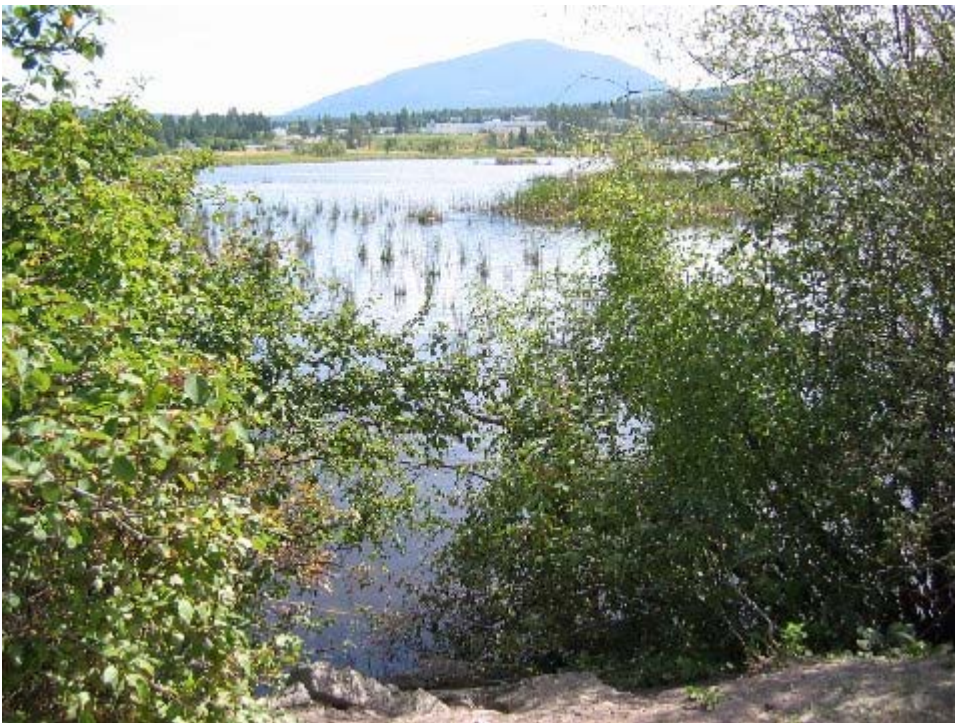
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I stopped in a little burg called Fernie for gas and lunch. After I got gas, I noticed a Ford GT in the parking lot:



I thought, Geez, that's the same color as Jeff Larson's GT. Upon closer look, I see that it has Washington plates – it is Jeff Larson's! So I found him inside and we had lunch together. Pretty unusual occurrence since he was randomly headed west from the GT Convention in Dearborn, and I'm randomly headed east.

Let's see, what else have I learned? Well, I found out at this spot:



that turtles lack sex chromosomes so gender is determined during incubation. Colder incubation leads to males, and warmer, females. Take that Cliff Claven!

I'm learning the Provinces now. You start at British Columbia, then you head into the Kansas Province. They call it Alberta, but you could fool me. As I cruised through the wheat fields, the MP3 player came up with Harry Chapin's *Mail Order Anney* song. Couldn't be much more appropriate. I enjoy the plains though too.

Well, I won't bore you any further – I'll let you know in a few days how things are going. Wish I could read it now so I would know where I'll be.

Regards,

Brian/Dad

Subj: **Brian and Gertrude Head East (2)**  
Date: 8/26/2006 6:51:24 PM Pacific Standard Time  
From: [BrianLaine](mailto:BrianLaine)  
To: [fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com](mailto:fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com), [chances\\_grandpa@verizon.net](mailto:chances_grandpa@verizon.net), [Manningdesign](mailto:Manningdesign), [dwh@hughes.net](mailto:dwh@hughes.net), [Majava500](mailto:Majava500), [XRBen](mailto:XRBen), [emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net](mailto:emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net), [RachelC246](mailto:RachelC246), [Ole1975](mailto:Ole1975), [ReanLaine](mailto:ReanLaine), [lkind@foxinternet.com](mailto:lkind@foxinternet.com), [shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net), [MarkLaine](mailto:MarkLaine), [stingray@foxinternet.com](mailto:stingray@foxinternet.com), [jasperbay@rockisland.com](mailto:jasperbay@rockisland.com), [darmar59@yahoo.com](mailto:darmar59@yahoo.com)

Hello Again –

Just thought I'd give you a quick update on things. After leaving Medicine Hat, Alberta, I headed east on Hwy 1, since Hwy 3 ended at that point. Spent a good day cruising across the wheat fields of Saskatchewan. Nice open roads, not all that much traffic, and one can breeze along at about 75-85 across the prairie. Saskatchewan looks a lot like Alberta. It's interesting that they have all these miles of high speed freeway with intersections all over. No stinking on-ramps and off-ramps for these guys!

Tonight I stopped at the major city of Moosomin, Saskatchewan, not too far from Manitoba. It's above central North Dakota. Found my favorite kind of hotel, not a chain, and with chairs out in front of the rooms. Spent a lot of time cleaning all the bugs off Gert, they're really plentiful after a day of riding. Speaking of bugs, there are a lot of bees here. Seems like whenever you stop there are a bunch around the bike, mostly munching on dead bugs I guess. Soon as the sun starts to go down, fortunately, they start to dissipate.

I did find that it is wise to check behind hotels too, you might find an active train track right behind the hotel. The guy at the office told me not to come to continental breakfast before 6:30, and I just laughed – but then this morning a tooting, loud train came through about 5:30, shaking the building, I can see why he has that problem.

Even though the plains/prairie gets a little boring sometimes, it is pretty. I appreciate how the road department thinks here. Instead of hiring a bunch of government employees to groom the median and edges, they grow hay! You see bales all over between the separated highways and along the edge. They probably make money on road maintenance.

Speaking of employees, the people cleaning rooms, washing dishes, doing yard work, etc here **aren't** Mexicans. I guess one border is enough for them to illegally cross. I mentioned that to the owner of the hotel and he said that there **is** an influx of Mexicans, a packing plant in Brandon (about a hundred miles away) has two families of them!

The sun in the eyes is an issue while riding. The ideal situation is to sleep in until noon if you are heading east. The ideal situation for going west is to get up ea.... The ideal situation is not to go west at all. It's been nice knowing you, Chris. Actually, for you bikers, LeeRoy gave me a good tip about this. He suggested putting a tinted strip across your face shield just above eye level. I got one (about ten bucks at the local dealer) and installed it, and have to say it works well. It shades your eyes some, and if you get direct sun in your eyes, you can tip down your head and look through it. LeeRoy, forget all those bad things I said about you, this makes up for it. I was thinking that if it works so well on the face shield, I should put a strip across the top of each of the lenses on my glasses – cool!

I stopped off at a little place called Wolseley Manitoba, right in the middle of the plains and found this wonderful respite for a break:



Speaking of willows, they are building a lot of new highways here, you can see the construction and stakes for miles. I enjoy seeing that a lot of it goes over swamps and wetlands, they're just filling it in and paving. No Sierra club stopping these people, they are just getting the job done cost-effectively.

New day:

I made through Winnipeg about noon. Just before Winnipeg the prairie started to turn into deciduous trees on rolling hills ("Real" trees in Chris' opinion). Winnipeg is a big beautiful city with parks and handsome buildings throughout, very urban. As I was going through town, I noticed a Mercedes dealer with some Smart cars outside, so I had to go take a look. Just to give you an idea of the size, compare to Gert:



They only sell diesels in Canada, and they get 85 MPG. I sat in it, and was amazed with all the room and the airy feeling. These make a lot of sense! Unfortunately, when they arrive in the US in 2008, we will only get gas versions, evidently our diesel emission standards are too stringent. Still be a fun economical car. The little brochure I picked up listed the base prices (several configurations) from \$16,700-19,650 Canadian. He said they really sell for \$19k-27k though. They have sold 190 already in Winnipeg. Just think Chris, we could park two of these end to end in one garage spot, opening one more spot for a special interest car!

As I headed east from Winnipeg it just got prettier and prettier: trees, rocks, hills, water – all the things necessary for a happy life! Just to give you an idea of the size of Canada, just east of Winnipeg I came across a sign that says it is the

geographic center of the country.

I stopped by Kenora – a beautiful resort town on Lake by the Woods:



I'm impressed by how the rocks integrate into the water here more than at home, it really makes for great sight-seeing. Here's another lake I passed by – they are all over now, it's great!



I can see that my traveling days are going to get shorter now that there is more to ogle and the roads more twisty. I've been averaging a tad over 400 miles/day up until now. The speed limits are getting progressively slower too, in Ontario the

speed limit is only 100 km/h (about 55 MPH). It seems like crawling after the faster days in the plains. I still wouldn't trade the locale though. I've only seen two policemen in my whole trip across Canada, makes one feel a little more independent.

Anyway, tonight I made it to Dryden Ontario, which is on Hwy 17 (Hwy 1 finally petered out on me too), roughly north of central Minnesota. I don't know where to next, but Thunder Bay sounds interesting, and it's only about 200 miles east of here on Lake Superior.

Your wandering reporter,

Brian/Dad

Subj: **(no subject)**  
Date: 8/28/2006 4:06:11 PM Pacific Standard Time  
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Hello Again –

In case you're wondering where the heck I am (as if I knew most of the time), herein lies a continuation of the trip.

After leaving Dryden Ontario, I continued east to Thunder Bay. At long last I get to see Lake Superior, that's it in the background

:





It's been a lot of years since I studied geography and memorized the names of the Great Lakes, but I presume pretty soon I will end up at Lake Superior too.

The country here is really pretty, and nice riding. Lots of nice curvy roads through the conifer forests, lakes all over, riding through beautiful rock formations. For example here's a typical lake along the road:



(no crawdads in it though)

I won't bore you with any more, but you get the gist. A lot like the northwest but in a different place. I tried to get a picture

of Lake Superior for you from downtown Thunder Bay, but drove and drove without actually getting to where you could both see it and stop. I'd still be driving around there if I didn't have the GPS to bail me out; it's a big spread-out city of about 135,000 folks. It was nice to get out on the open road again. This Arlington recluse can only take so many people and traffic at one time.

Here was a seagull looking for a target to crap on, he let me walk within a couple feet of him to take the picture, I decided it was too risky to take a bottom view:



The traffic signs are a little different here – in addition to having twice as many signs as you need (English/French), also sometimes instead of a green arrow saying it's OK to turn in front of opposing traffic, and you just get a flashing green. Took me a while to figure that out, still makes me nervous. The language duality applies to TV too, a lot of the channels are taken up with shows in French, or dubbed with French. I want to see a Rambo movie dubbed in French.

Speaking of English/French, here they spell license as licence. If they wanted to change it, since they use British English here (e.g., centre, recognise), wouldn't you think they would use s's instead of c's so it would be lisense?

Anyway, after leaving Thunder Bay I continued west on Hwy 17. This was sort of an irrevocable decision since now I'm headed over the north side of the Great Lakes. No turning south now until I get to Michigan or New York. We'll see. I was drawn this direction though, it's beautiful and I'm sure less populated than south of the Lakes.

So tonight I made it to Marathon Ontario, which is about north of Chicago. Nice little town along Lake Superior on Hwy 17. Hwy 17 is also called the Terry Fox highway. In case you haven't heard of him, he's a Canadian who lost his leg to cancer, then in an effort to raise awareness of cancer, decided to run from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean – on one leg. He ran about 26-27 miles per day. He made it over three thousand miles before he succumbed to the cancer spreading to his lungs. Makes me feel a little guilty lighting up a cigar along the highway named in his honor.

New day: This morning the sun started shining plenty early, must be an artifact of being in the Eastern Time zone, guess I'll try to adjust.

Good old Hwy 17 keeps going, I haven't hit the end of it yet. I drove around the north edge of Lake Superior, getting to Sault Ste. Marie in early afternoon. That's another really pretty city, but then they all seem to be along the edge of these lakes. Sault Ste. Marie is located on the seaway that connects Lake Michigan and Lake Huron with Lake Superior – a lot of locks busy here.

I liked this view of Lake Huron from beside the road:



Continuing further, I ended up tonight at Sudbury Ontario, another fairly large city (about 135,000 people), which is not too far from Georgian Bay, part of Lake Huron. This is roughly north of Toronto and western Pennsylvania.

I haven't quite decided whether to head south at this point, ending up in Buffalo New York, or going further east. I'll be busy checking the weather maps at alternative destinations. I've been trying to ignore the fact that I've got to get back at some point, I'm over 2,500 miles from home at the moment, but want to take a different route back too, making it even longer. Hmm.

I'll let you know later where I end up. Of course if I don't know where I'm going, how will I know when I get there? Well, as you know, it's the journey, not the destination, and it's been a good one thus far.

Regards,

Brian/Dad

Subj: **Brian and Gertrude Head East (4)**  
 Date: 8/31/2006 5:10:37 PM Pacific Standard Time  
 From: [BrianLaine](mailto:BrianLaine)  
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Hello Again –

*Executive Summary: Brian's present location is Martinsburg West Virginia. Traveled through British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and into West Virginia. Approximately 3,800 miles.*

*For excruciating, boring detail, keep reading, you've been warned!*

Success! I made into Quebec – now I can tick off all the major Provinces on Gert's performance report.

After leaving Sudbury Ontario, I continued East on good old Hwy 17. Going through North Bay (a nice resort town on Lake Nipissing) then on to follow the Ottawa River which separates Ontario from Quebec. I crossed the river at Pembroke and traveled through Quebec for a while. It was interesting in Quebec, lots of French signs everywhere, they don't reciprocate by having both languages on signs like Ontario. For example:



However, it was beautiful in Quebec, farmland, dairy cows, hay fields (since they are in Canada maybe they should be called eh fields), old barns, etc. I rode through Fort-Coulonge, then as I came back to the Ontario-bound river crossing, I found a beautiful little town called Portage du fort. Sat at this nice park to enjoy a cigar (notice the Quebec flag):



They also had a really pretty church in town – isn't that a graceful steeple?



My daily travels were orchestrated by a couple from Ontario who gave me suggestions, and even a very nice map of the area.

After getting back on the Ontario side of the river I continued on Hwy 17 into Ottawa, having the misfortune of hitting it at about 5 PM. As good as the drivers are everywhere else in Canada, things go to worms when you get near a big city like this (785,000 people). Normally everybody here is great about only using the fast lane for passing, good blinker usage, etc

Speaking of traffic, since the speed limit is so low in Ontario (generally 55), almost everybody goes a lot faster most of the

time. I was tempted to break out the radar detector which I had removed upon coming into Canada, so I checked the Provincial rules via the Internet. Turns out that they are illegal in most Provinces, and if they find you with one (even if turned off) they will confiscate it and give you a big fine. Ontario has some of the most stringent rules regarding this, but guess where one of the largest manufacturers of radar detectors (Beltronics) is? Nowhere else but good old Ontario.

They have a pretty good highway naming convention here too. For example Hwy 17 is called 17 where it is two lane, but 417 where it is four-lane. Makes it easy when looking at a map to anticipate what the road is like. I prefer to avoid the 4xx roads in general.

Anyway, I continued south, and across the bridge over the Saint Lawrence Seaway into New York. The bridge is several miles long, and is all grated steel deck. For those of you who don't ride motorcycles, it's really a creepy feeling driving on this surface, the bike just seems to do its own thing underneath you. I had visions of falling down, and having the grated deck work like a big cheese grater on my body, with the remnants falling into the river below. When they investigated the accident, they would be wondering if there was a rider. Fortunately that didn't happen.

No problems getting through US Customs, then I found a hotel in nearby Ogdensburg New York.

New day:

After leaving Ogdensburg, I headed southeast into the Adirondack Mountains (touring through Adirondack Park of course). While there are beautiful roads with creeks and nice trees, and nice curvy roads – well, they have a different idea here about what a mountain is. For example, if you look across this lake, you will see what is loosely referred to as a mountain here:



Next I decided to head over to Vermont. Had a beautiful ride past Lake George and through the back roads to western Vermont, then decided to head south on whatever back roads I could find. Beautiful country! For the fishermen among us, I went by the Orvis headquarters, and then not much later, for the women among us, the Lennox headquarters. This was all south of Rutland, a place where I have ordered many machine tool supplies through the years. Fortunately, I don't have any more room on Gert to pack away stuff, so I was saved from purchasing anything along the way. A lot of the riding was through pretty country like this:



In southern Vermont, I came across the first marble quarry in the US. It was used until the size requirement for slabs became too big, then it was shut down. Still plenty popular though, as you can see:



I went by a big horse fancy horse property named "Practically Stable." In one town, I was a little confused about where I should get on a back road, and wasn't get much help from the GPS since she wanted to go another way. A guy stopped, got out of his car to ask if he could help. I told him what I wanted to find and he started to explain, but then said, it's just easier to lead you there, follow me! He was nice enough to drive about five miles to direct me. Nice people everywhere.

I kept going south into Massachusetts, then further into Connecticut. The roads were just great, not much traffic, lots of

forests and farmland to go through. I enjoy seeing all the brick and stone homes, many very old. It's great having the GPS, you can just set it to generally where you want to be at the end of the day, then you can take whatever roads look interesting, and she will keep you headed in the right general direction, often through amazingly small nice roads as she corrects for your wanderings. I have to hand it to Garmin for doing a good job on their portable units – better than the GPS in any car I've had for a fraction of the price.

Finally, I headed west into southeast New York, where I found a locally-owned hotel to stay at in Rhinebeck. Unfortunately, it doesn't have Internet access, so I'll wait another day before sending you an update. Even the "Wagon Train" hotel had Internet access! This hotel is small (eight units) enough that when you need ice for your libation, the manager goes into her apartment and gets you some out of her refrigerator.

New day:

Off to Woodstock for breakfast! Yes, that Woodstock. I didn't go out to the site of the concert, but downtown is still a hippie, arty place, probably as it was in the sixties. Nestled in the woods, only reachable via small curvy roads running along creeks.

After leaving Woodstock, I headed into the Catskill Mountains (Catskill Park of course). Pretty, similar to the Adirondacks so I won't repeat the description.

It's interesting to see some small town's claim to fame. One town I rode through had a big sign on the outskirts of town: "Home of the 1977 division D State Soccer Champs."

After leaving the Catskills, I wandered through the back roads as much as possible into Pennsylvania. Passed through such revered car places as Hershey and Carlisle. Had to think of your dad, Clark, as I passed through Wilkes-Barre, the home of Penn State.

As I headed south, the weather started to deteriorate, so I got back on the freeway and headed through a corner of Maryland and barely into West Virginia. In the end it was raining, so it was nice to find a spot then. It even has a laundry which I desperately need, so I'll be set up for another week or two in that regard with out wearing my shorts and socks inside out. When I asked the lady at the desk about the weather, she said "We're really in for it tomorrow." This isn't a bad hotel, the price is right, might be here for a couple days if that's the case, not only is it extremely uncomfortable to be riding in the rain, it's not all that safe – I'll avoid it the best I can.

In one day I've heard a Native American speak with a New York accent, and the guy who runs an Italian restaurant speak with a drawl. Go figure.

Until next time, ya'all...

Brian/Dad

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After leaving Ogdensburg, I headed southeast into the Adirondack Mountains (touring through Adirondack Park of course). While there are beautiful roads with creeks and nice trees, and nice curvy roads – well, they have a different idea here about what a mountain is. For example, if you look across this lake, you will see what is loosely referred to as a mountain here:



Next I decided to head over to Vermont. Had a beautiful ride past Lake George and through the back roads to western Vermont, then decided to head south on whatever back roads I could find. Beautiful country! For the fishermen among us, I went by the Orvis headquarters, and then not much later, for the women among us, the Lennox headquarters. This was all south of Rutland, a place where I have ordered many machine tool supplies through the years. Fortunately, I don't have any more room on Gert to pack away stuff, so I was saved from purchasing anything along the way. A lot of the riding was through pretty country like this:



In southern Vermont, I came across the first marble quarry in the US. It was used until the size requirement for slabs became too big, then it was shut down. Still plenty popular though, as you can see:



I went by a big horse fancy horse property named "Practically Stable." In one town, I was a little confused about where I should get on a back road, and wasn't get much help from the GPS since she wanted to go another way. A guy stopped, got out of his car to ask if he could help. I told him what I wanted to find and he started to explain, but then said, it's just easier to lead you there, follow me! He was nice enough to drive about five miles to direct me. Nice people everywhere.

I kept going south into Massachusetts, then further into Connecticut. The roads were just great, not much traffic, lots of

forests and farmland to go through. I enjoy seeing all the brick and stone homes, many very old. It's great having the GPS, you can just set it to generally where you want to be at the end of the day, then you can take whatever roads look interesting, and she will keep you headed in the right general direction, often through amazingly small nice roads as she corrects for your wanderings. I have to hand it to Garmin for doing a good job on their portable units – better than the GPS in any car I've had for a fraction of the price.

Finally, I headed west into southeast New York, where I found a locally-owned hotel to stay at in Rhinebeck. Unfortunately, it doesn't have Internet access, so I'll wait another day before sending you an update. Even the "Wagon Train" hotel had Internet access! This hotel is small (eight units) enough that when you need ice for your libation, the manager goes into her apartment and gets you some out of her refrigerator.

New day:

Off to Woodstock for breakfast! Yes, that Woodstock. I didn't go out to the site of the concert, but downtown is still a hippie, arty place, probably as it was in the sixties. Nestled in the woods, only reachable via small curvy roads running along creeks.

After leaving Woodstock, I headed into the Catskill Mountains (Catskill Park of course). Pretty, similar to the Adirondacks so I won't repeat the description.

It's interesting to see some small town's claim to fame. One town I rode through had a big sign on the outskirts of town: "Home of the 1977 division D State Soccer Champs."

After leaving the Catskills, I wandered through the back roads as much as possible into Pennsylvania. Passed through such revered car places as Hershey and Carlisle. Had to think of your dad, Clark, as I passed through Wilkes-Barre, the home of Penn State.

As I headed south, the weather started to deteriorate, so I got back on the freeway and headed through a corner of Maryland and barely into West Virginia. In the end it was raining, so it was nice to find a spot then. It even has a laundry which I desperately need, so I'll be set up for another week or two in that regard with out wearing my shorts and socks inside out. When I asked the lady at the desk about the weather, she said "We're really in for it tomorrow." This isn't a bad hotel, the price is right, might be here for a couple days if that's the case, not only is it extremely uncomfortable to be riding in the rain, it's not all that safe – I'll avoid it the best I can.

In one day I've heard a Native American speak with a New York accent, and the guy who runs an Italian restaurant speak with a drawl. Go figure.

Until next time, ya'all...

Brian/Dad

Subj: **Brian and Gertrude head east (5)**  
 Date: 9/3/2006 5:38:55 PM Pacific Standard Time  
 From: [BrianLaine](#)  
 To: [fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com](mailto:fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com), [chances\\_grandpa@verizon.net](mailto:chances_grandpa@verizon.net), [Manningdesign](#), [dwh@hughes.net](mailto:dwh@hughes.net), [Majava500](#), [XRBen](#), [emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net](mailto:emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net), [RachelC246](#), [Ole1975](#), [ReanLaine](#), [lkind@foxinternet.com](mailto:lkind@foxinternet.com), [shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net), [MarkLaine](#), [stingray@foxinternet.com](mailto:stingray@foxinternet.com), [jasperbay@rockisland.com](mailto:jasperbay@rockisland.com), [darmar59@yahoo.com](mailto:darmar59@yahoo.com)

Hello Again –

*All right, let's play the "where is Brian" game. I'll give you a hint: the Peach State. If you paid attention in grade school and know the answer, you can press the "delete mail" button and move on with your life. If you didn't, and are inquisitive, you are sentenced to reading this tome.*

Well, it's been a day of sitting in the hotel in Martinsville WV, with lots of wind and raindrops hitting the window. A peripheral effect of Hurricane Ernesto. Gert is waiting anxiously outside, staying halfway dry since they let me put her under the veranda:



Pleasant day though - reading, being on the Internet, watching infomercials on TV. But how many "Magic Fisherman" does one need? Even if it "Catches more fish than you can ever imagine!"

For dinner, I walked down the street to "Hoss's," an all-you-can-eat buffet. I have to say, though, it was probably named after the clientele. Must be a competitor to the Hungry Heifer.

Next day:

It was supposed to clear up about noon, but at 11:30 it's still raining and blowing, so I'm going to make a run for it. Suit up in about everything I've got, including the rain suit that I got just before the trip, and head out.

It pours for about an hour or two, but then starts to clear up some. Then even have some semblance of warm, ah, feels so good. Shortly we are leaving West Virginia for Virginia. The Tour Master rain suit works well, even if it wasn't too expensive (about forty bucks), I recommend it for you bikers. It's even possible to use it, stay dry, and then even get it back into the stuff bag it came with!

We're traveling in the Shenandoah Valley now, very pretty. I couldn't stop at any ideal view spots, but these give you an idea:



Fritz, if you have an eagle eye, you will see a guy mowing to the right of the picture on his Ford 8N:



We run into a traffic stoppage on I-81, a car lost control of his travel trailer, so we sit and inch along for a few miles. Getting really hot and muggy for this sort of activity, and the temp gauge on Gert goes up a bar or two, but still comfortably in the

safe zone.



I can't resist checking out "Natural Bridge" along the way. After all, it is the "eighth wonder of the world." Actually it is quite impressive (215 feet high inside), but it's a long walk down and back to see it (176 steps each way!). I don't think the other seven wonders have to worry much though:



For all of the Oregon State University alumni among us, I came across a tragic scene, beaver road-kill:



It was actually pretty big, and no small feat to photograph on a busy road. I'm surprised that Beavers aren't smart enough to find a cross walk or put out some flares. Much as I hate to admit it, I don't think I've ever seen Duck road-kill.

Eventually, I made it down to a small burg in southern Virginia called Abingdon. We're in the Appalachians now. It's only 14 miles now from Bristol Tennessee, and you all know what that is? Right, it's where David Massengill grew up. I'll get to go through that first thing in the morning, and know just what to crank up on the MP-3 player.

I am finding the classic southern hospitality here. People are so friendly, and there's no problem striking up conversations with about anyone, wish that was a more national trait. In fact, if you have to go to the bathroom or need to get somewhere, its best not to say hi to someone you meet, and sometimes even that's not necessary to get them going.

Next day:

Well, to summarize today, I have to say I've been on the best motorcycling roads of my life. Made the whole trip worthwhile all in of itself. Now this could serve as a much better "eighth wonder."

I headed south into Tennessee, and took highway 129 out of Knoxville into the Smokey Mountain Park. This is a revered road, known as "The Dragon's Tail" or "Deals Gap," which I have read about for many years. 318 turns in 11 miles. It is just incredibly beautiful, all well-maintained asphalt, nice banking, scenic water beside the road in many places, and no end of bikes and sports cars taking advantage of it. It's about 40 miles from Knoxville, and starts to get progressively better as you get closer to it. I motored down Gert's windshield (so she looks like a Hyabusa) and had at it. Here are some pictures:

This is at just one of the rest stops along the way -



Typical corner -



At the end, there's a restaurant and gift shop, one or two people were stopped here -



As you can see, there are a few other people taking advantage of this road too! However, while there are groups of bikes of many speeds, anything from two-up touring people on Gold Wings with trailers to the crotch rockets (one of which ended up in the ditch while I was there, but the rider seemed to be OK), one can motor through at about any speed. There were a number of cars on the road too, a Viper, a number of M3s and M3 coupes, and a lot of S2000 Hondas.

Anyway, I took many, many more pictures than this, but it would bring Al Gore's Internet to a crawl if you all tried to download them.

Anybody recognize this?



It's the dam that Harrison Ford jumped from in "The Fugitive," which is towards the end of the run. That boat down there is still probably dragging for Harrison's body, Tommy Lee Jones probably forgot to tell him to stop. "Thunder Road" and "Two-Lane Blacktop" were also filmed on this road.

Just when you think you are done (you've gone from Tennessee to North Carolina by now), you take the back roads to civilization. I took Hwy 143 (which turns into Hwy 165), and it was almost as beautiful of a ride as "the Tail" – and it went on for probably 50 miles. These Smokey Mountains are beautiful, and they are mountains – I went over a pass that was over 5,000 tall.

If any of you want to drive/ride to the ultimate sports car/bike road, I can't recommend this highly enough.

After eating dinner in Ducktown Tennessee (\$4.95 for a complete dinner with turkey/dressing, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, and peach cobbler dessert), I wandered down into Georgia, where I am tonight, at a town called Dalton, which is about 15 miles south of Chattanooga Tennessee. I chose the Best Western to ensure I had good Internet access,

but the owner (Mr. Patel, who knows little English) and I couldn't get their wireless going. But, for \$42 a night I'm not going to complain too loudly. And besides, there's a Motel 6 next door that I see on my wireless list (albeit weak), I can probably wander over there this evening and send this compliments of them.

I can see how one could easily spend a complete summer on the eastern part of this tour. There are so many things to choose from to see: Civil War battlefields, parks, presidential historic sites, beautiful back roads, and so on. Unfortunately, at some point I need to return to the stress and strain of retired life, so can't see them all on this trip. Also, in the back of my mind is the thought that summer is very soon to end. Going to have to start heading west now. Think I'll skirt along the south part of the US for awhile, but I don't make any plans until the evening before, so no telling where I'll end up. I sure didn't expect to end up this far from home, but am enjoying it very much.

Hope you're enjoying the trip with me via these emails.

Until next time...

Brian/Dad

Subj: **Brian and Gertrude head east (6)**  
Date: 9/6/2006 6:57:40 PM Pacific Standard Time  
From: [BrianLaine](mailto:BrianLaine)  
To: [fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com](mailto:fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com), [chances\\_grandpa@verizon.net](mailto:chances_grandpa@verizon.net), [Manningdesign](mailto:Manningdesign), [dwh@hughes.net](mailto:dwh@hughes.net), [Majava500](mailto:Majava500), [XRBen](mailto:XRBen), [emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net](mailto:emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net), [RachelC246](mailto:RachelC246), [Ole1975](mailto:Ole1975), [ReanLaine](mailto:ReanLaine), [lkind@foxinternet.com](mailto:lkind@foxinternet.com), [shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net), [MarkLaine](mailto:MarkLaine), [stingray@foxinternet.com](mailto:stingray@foxinternet.com), [jasperbay@rockisland.com](mailto:jasperbay@rockisland.com), [darmar59@yahoo.com](mailto:darmar59@yahoo.com)  
BCC: [BrianLaine](mailto:BrianLaine)

*Brian & Gert: Coming to a town near you...*

Hello Again –

*Too many of you got the answer to the last state quiz and got to skip reading the email. Therefore, I'm going to step up the ante. Where I am tonight is (1) the first state to give women the right to vote and (2) has the lowest population of all 50 United States.*

The saga continues. After leaving Dalton Georgia, I headed north to Chattanooga TN, then southwest into Alabama with thoughts of *My Cousin Vinny* in the back of my mind. Anyway, I passed through Huntsville, which I had visited for about a month on behalf of Fluke many years ago. It's even more modern looking than ever, a nice city. It really is high-tech, in contrast to passing through the Tennessee "Technology Corridor" and seeing a bunch of trailer manufacturers.

After getting to Decatur Alabama, I stopped to rest at a marina:



Nice place, one guy came by and offered me a beer from his pickup. He said he had to come down to his boat to have a beer or two so his wife didn't know. I'll bet that really tricks her! Anyway, after a while, Gertrude's sister came bubbling by. Identical bike. The owner, Bob Compton, is a retired guy, very nice. After chatting for a few minutes, he asked where I was going, and he said his house was only a few miles off my route, follow him and he'd take me there and make lunch for me. Before I could respond, he was off and I followed. For an old retired guy, he didn't let any grass grow under his bike either. After about fifteen miles we headed up a long driveway to his beautiful home. Here's Bob and the two Gerts:



Here's his home and the view from his deck. He owns the lake you see also:





He made a great lunch for me and toured me around, wonderful guy. Then he lead me back out to the road I needed to exit on, and we bid adieu. Nice experience. Really nice people in the south. The day before I met a great couple in North Carolina who lived for a few years in Edmonds. He taught pharmacy at the UW, but then went back into private industry (pharmaceutical company) to get better pay. Rode a nice current-version Triumph Bonneville with his wife on the back. Since it was a Triumph instead of a Harley, she was allowed to wear a bra and jacket.

From Decatur, I took some relatively small back roads, and passed through the corner of Mississippi on the way to Memphis. Again, thinking of memories of being stationed there while I was in the Navy. This is the fourth time on this trip alone that I've seen the "Welcome to Tennessee" signs. Traffic was horrible in Memphis, and it was a nice relief to get headed west and into Arkansas, although the traffic there wasn't much better until I got quite a few miles into Arkansas. Tonight, I made it to Lonoke Arkansas, about twenty miles east of Little Rock. After recently reading Bill Clinton's biography, it would be intriguing to see the historic sites of his there, but I don't think his heart was ever in Arkansas, he always was anxious to move out of Arkansas, using it as a staging area for bigger and better things.

I really am in the Bible belt. Baptist churches everywhere. At the hotel last night they even had the Bible in the hotel room conveniently opened up to the Psalms for my reading pleasure.

When I hooked up the wireless Internet tonight, I found that the signal was stronger from the Super 8 hotel next door then the one in this hotel. I mentioned that to the gal at the front desk and her response, rather than think about how to make theirs stronger, was (in a southern drawl) that she was going over to the Super 8 and kick some butt!

Anybody want to pick some cotton? There's a lot of it around here.



Next Day:

Sitting in the parking lot this morning was this truck. Probably headed somewhere from the NASCAR races over the weekend in Fontana.



After leaving Lonoke, I headed east on Hwy 40 towards Oklahoma. Almost forty years ago I drove out Route 66 to Memphis (when I was a 'Ute'). Hwy 40 took its place, but I have to say that I enjoyed Route 66 a lot more. The scenery

was fine, but not spectacular, here's a typical view of my morning riding:



I ran into these two bikers with bandannas at a gas station, had to laugh at the Harley type garb in conjunction with the bike (the scooter Daryl, not the Vulcan which is *baaad!*):



Anyway, headed into Oklahoma, up through Muskogee, through Tulsa (big city!) and over to Hwy 35 north, then up to Kansas.

There are a lot of toll roads in Oklahoma and Kansas, seems like every few miles they are hitting you up for anywhere between seventy five cents and a dollar seventy five. Probably spent ten bucks today on tolls.

The scenery degraded some the further north I went, this was typical of the afternoon ride:



Nothing against Kansas, Lynne, it is pretty, but for motorcycling it's not ideal – no hills and no reasons to put curves into the roads. Went up through Wichita (another big flat city), then started west on Hwy 70. I made it to Russell Kansas tonight and found a hotel. That's about in the middle of the state.

So mostly, it's blasting through the flatlands at the moment, looking forward to hitting the Rockies. I went about 500 miles yesterday and 650 today. The weather was ideal, I took off at 7:30 this morning and was able to enjoy about ideal temperature all day – not too hot, and not too cool. Can't ask for better than that. Other than the one rain-day, I've been extremely lucky in this regard.

I've been heading in a northwest direction across the prairie. As I ride along, my left-handed brain is thinking, what's the square root of two, the hypotenuse of a right triangle with two equal sides? Well, it's 1.414, which is how many times longer it is to go across the prairie this way. Maybe I should have headed straight across to California. Next time.

Miscellaneous topics:

1. With the dark strip across my face shield, I've noticed that when you go around corners, you always keep your head upright. Do you suppose that's necessary for proper balance?

2. Two bumper stickers I enjoyed:

I'm Retired: Nothing to do, and all day to do it.

Don't get even – get odd.

3. I ran into a Harley guy who picked up my good Arai helmet, and said "what a lead weight." He handed me his helmet, and I discovered it weighed nothing. He told me he bought a Darth Vader helmet at Toys-R-Us, then sawed off the back, heated it with a torch to get the right edges, then put some upholstery in it. His comment: "Sometimes if you want the best, you have to make it yourself!"

If I run into Dorothy while I'm in Kansas, I'll let you know

Next Day:

It must be getting near fall, the bike was covered with dew and it was cold this morning. I decided to have an extra cup of coffee or two before departing, but it was cold then too. Nothing my jacket and vest couldn't fend off though, and once I got on the road it was as enjoyable as ever.

Well, I didn't run into Dorothy. She's probably pretty old by now anyway.

I headed east on Hwy 70, pretty much the same scenery as before, just blasted through to the Denver area. Unfortunately, it was the middle of the day so I couldn't look up Dave Dewoina, and there were thundershowers forecast for the afternoon and evening, so I decided to make a run for it. I stopped at Littleton, where the Shelby-American Museum is, supposed to be excellent, but unfortunately it was closed. I should have done my homework about its hours, I missed it last time I was through these parts too.

I took a toll way out of Denver, and there were three tolls collected (two bucks each) within about 20 miles. Seem a little much for me. I was thinking of a good toll solution for Seattle. How about turning the commuter lanes into high speed toll express lanes? Charge a few bucks to use the lane, but then have an 80 MPH limit on it, with 70 MPH minimum. I'd be shelling out to use it, and I'll bet it would do a lot more good for traffic flow than the express lanes. They could use the revenue to improve traffic flow else wise.

Speaking of getting money out for tolls, since my wallet is kind of uncomfortable on the bike, at the beginning of the trip I stuffed my credit card and a few bucks into my front pocket and the wallet into my tank bag. Here it is weeks later, and I haven't had the need for my wallet yet. Men, why do we carry wallets?

After going north into Cheyenne Wyoming, I headed west on I-80. At long last, hills and curves started to appear. In fact, in the middle of the day (just east of Laramie) I was down to my knit shirt and started to get cold. Then I see a sign beside the road that it was 8,460 feet elevation there, making it understandable. Beautiful scenery around here, red rock formations and rolling hills. I ended up tonight in Rawlins Wyoming, in a trucker's hotel. A pleasant 620 mile day, which only could have been improved upon had there been a little less wind along the way. Here's what it looks like around here, things are getting better!



A trucker befriended me at the hotel and told me to come over to the tavern after I checked in. He said he and all his

trucker buddies would be there until closing time. Makes me worry a little riding near the hung over truckers in the morning. A couple of days ago, another trucker told me how bad so many truck drivers are, many just out of driver's school. He told me to be especially careful around JB Hunt trucks, he said they hire anybody who can climb into the cab.

Well, I'm less than 1,500 miles from home now (we've gone about 6,300 miles thus far), so should be rolling into Arlington pretty soon. I'll let you know how the rest of the trip goes.

Brian/Dad

Subj: **Brian and Gertrude head east (7)**  
Date: 9/8/2006 8:09:52 PM Pacific Standard Time  
From: [BrianLaine](#)  
To: [fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com](mailto:fritz.drach@fredmeyer.com), [chances\\_grandpa@verizon.net](mailto:chances_grandpa@verizon.net), [Manningdesign](#), [dwh@hughes.net](mailto:dwh@hughes.net), [Majava500](#), [XRBen](#), [emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net](mailto:emily.k.thorpe@wamu.net), [RachelC246](#), [Ole1975](#), [ReanLaine](#), [lkind@foxinternet.com](mailto:lkind@foxinternet.com), [shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shelbydoc@sbcglobal.net), [MarkLaine](#), [stingray@foxinternet.com](mailto:stingray@foxinternet.com), [jasperbay@rockisland.com](mailto:jasperbay@rockisland.com), [darmar59@yahoo.com](mailto:darmar59@yahoo.com)  
BCC: [BrianLaine](#)

Hello Again –

This should be the last email from me for a while, saving you a few delete clicks. I'll keep it short (right!).

After leaving Rawlins Wyoming, I mostly stuck to the freeways. I'm getting anxious to get home, and I've toured through much of it earlier on Gert.

It was really cold in the morning, so I put on lots of clothes and headed west on I-80. After about 200 miles I pulled into a small town for gas and a cup of coffee to warm up. Incidentally, at the McDonalds I stopped at, they've really gone upscale, like they are trying to compete with Starbucks. Flat TVs on all the walls (including the head), leather easy chair groupings, plants... When I came out it was raining, adding a little more challenge to the already cool day. So I put on my rain suit and rode in the rain for about an hour, then intermittently for the next hour or so. Not all that unpleasant, but I was asking myself if I was having fun. My response was, compared to what?

As I motored to Salt Lake City, I did have to admire the beautiful rock formations in the area, like this:



As the elevation decreased, it started to warm up and dry out, and soon I was down to shirt sleeves again, and even a little warm at that. After Ogden, I headed up into Idaho, and made it just past Boise, to a small town called Nampa where I found a room. Another 600+ mile day, you can tell I'm looking forward to getting home again. I wanted to get past the Boise traffic so I wouldn't have to encounter in the morning – most of you know how I am in the morning – certainly not safely up to challenges such as that.

As I went through Boise, I noticed a new Cabella's that has just opened. LeeRoy, I think you should put Mike on the back of your Gold Wing and make a trip out here to it.

There's a haze and the smell of smoke around this area from the forest fires. I can see why, there's no green around from lack of rainfall. I was going to get an early start today, but it's still dark out at about 6:45 (Mountain Time), and the traffic is inched to a crawl going east into Boise, makes me glad that I decided to go past Boise last night. Time for another cup of coffee before leaving.

Next day:

Miscellaneous musings:

- A lot of states allow "triples," or three trailers on semis, but many (like Washington) don't. What do you suppose they do when they cross in and out of states like that? I've never seen a parking lot full of trailers outside Washington?

- Why do they call them semis? They are semi-what?

- Some states have speed signs with admonishments, for example: "75 MPH – no tolerance" or "70 MPH – strictly enforced." I'm looking for the state that has signs "75 MPH – or whatever."

After leaving Boise, I headed west into Oregon. Really pretty country in eastern Oregon. For example:



Pretty soon I was back in the prairie of eastern Washington, doing miles. The GPS was kind enough to send me through a bunch of two-lane roads, which I appreciated. After leaving Yakima, I headed up into the mountains again. Do you recognize this?



It's the good old Northwest, and it reminds me of how lucky we are to live here. You can travel all over this country, and won't find much that exceeds the beauty that we get to enjoy all the time. Sometimes you have to travel to appreciate what you have.

I rolled down our driveway late this afternoon, and as much as I enjoyed the trip, it's sure nice to be home again.

If you're interested in the statistics for the trip, see below. Gert can hardly wait for a wash and an oil change so she will be ready to hit the road again, but I doubt it will be this year.

Thanks for taking the trip with me,

Brian/Dad

**Trip Stats:**

Provinces/states visited: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. (6 provinces, 21 states).

Miles covered: 7,483

Miles on Gert after the trip: 26,295

Oil used: ½ quart

Mechanical problems: none

Overall MPG: 47.09

Average MPH: 62.1 (the GPS computes this, and doesn't include time when stopped)

Average mileage per day: 468 (lower during most of trip, but had a few "smoke'n" days toward the end)