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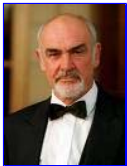
Hello -

Well, I didn't get much typing done on the recent trip, but I just got home a couple of hours ago, and before I forget, I'll give you a rundown on my recent Gertrude outing.

I met Daryl, my old Navy buddy in Baker City, Oregon. Daryl was my boss in the Navy back in the early 70's, so we've know each other almost forty years now. We were biking then, and neither of us have stopped since. Daryl's now 71. We may mature at some point - but that hasn't happened yet.

Why Wild Hog trip? Well Daryl got a new bike this year - a Buell Ulysses XT, to replace his Kawasaki. It's one of my favorite bikes too. As you probably know, Buell is owned by Harley, so really it's a Hog. And, like the Wild Hogs movie, we're wild "middle age" guys out for an adventure. Except Gertrude, while an air-cooled twin, can't be taken as a Hog, so it's Wild Hog rather than Wild Hogs. Daryl even has a bandana - how Harley-like is that! Daryl is also sporting a Sean Connery goatee these days...

This is Sean...



This is Daryl...



See Daryl, you get rid of the glasses and dress up in a tux and the women will be all over you.

Here's Daryl's new bike...



We stayed at one of our favorite spots in Baker City. One year the lady at the desk told us "there might be some women left from last night in your room," another year "we'll have steak and eggs in the morning if the chef shows up (of course he never has)", and this year "we used to have the best looking cleaning women come very early in the morning to the rooms, but somebody complained, so yesterday we stopped that."

Heading east, we wandered into Mountain Home Idaho via some nice curvy roads.

Along the way, we stopped at the Warhawk Air Museum in Nampa Idaho. They had some good exhibits, including an old Link flight simulator very similar to the one Daryl first operated in the '50s.



We even got a private tour of another hanger not normally opened to the public. This is one of only three helicopters that was brought back from Viet Nam...



Now neither Daryl or I are into fancy food or fancy places to stay, but we might have been pushing the bottom even for us with this place...



If you can't read the fine print, it's \$35 single, \$39 double - and according to the sign has all the important requirements. However, after paying, we find a bathroom that looks like this...



and every couple hours a train would go by across the street, just past the swimming pool with no water in it...



But, hopefully we didn't get any permanent rashes/bites, and the Internet did actually work for two or three minutes during our stay (this isn't an exaggeration). Just enough to type something in, but not enough to actually send it.

The next day, we headed further east with the destination of Idaho Falls. Along the way, we stopped at the first operating nuclear plant in the world. It's called EBR-1, and it was interesting to see. It started generating in about 1950 if I remember correctly. These lights are the first ones that were lit, demonstrating that it was generating power.



They purposely designed it as a breeder plant which generates more fuel (and waste) since they thought there wasn't enough fuel around. Initially we took a wrong turn and went past the plant. There we found a huge nuclear storage facility. There weren't a lot of signs announcing its presence - like "Bring your nuclear waste here - open M-F 8-5".

They also had parts for a nuclear airplane that was being developed in the 50's. It didn't get finished, but much effort was expended, including building a hanger, a sled for pulling it around, and the nuclear power plants. Plans were for an initial flight of about three weeks in duration. The nuclear turbojet motor was actually run in 1956. They weren't specific about why it wasn't finished.



We spent a long time playing with the "manipulators" at the plant. They were designed to allow you to simulate all the actions of a hand remotely to handle radioactive materials on the far side of the barrier. They work amazingly well. One of these would have been handy for touching anything at the hotel we were at earlier.



Another interesting site along the way is the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. It has some very interesting lava formations that hardly look like nature would have done. For example...



After arriving in Idaho Falls, our original intention was to go either to the International Selkirk Loop in northern Idaho/southern Canada, or go to Colorado to visit Mike Brennan, another old Navy friend. Well, going north didn't work out since one of us forgot our passport (and I won't say who, Daryl). We looked at the weather reports and it looked horrible going into Colorado, so we decided that we didn't want to see Mike all that bad. The only clear weather appeared to be west, so we high-tailed it back to Baker City - still looking for the girls left over from last night. It was a cold and wet ride - a good chance to try out all our warm clothes and rain suits. No girls waiting either.

When we woke up the next morning, it was pouring down rain. Since this was also the time for the Elkhorn Classic bicycle races, there were a lot of other motel residents looking as disappointed as us. Maybe more disappointed since they were riding around on tires that are so skinny. Riding a bike fast in the rain must be even more uncomfortable than doing so on a motorcycle - but there were still plenty of them peddling off into the horizon. Daryl and I resisted the temptation to get into our spandex so we would blend.

Once it cleared up a little, we headed off to Pendleton since the weather was supposedly looking better there. We took the long route for more twisting roads, and after three hours of motorcycling we were 25 miles further from our destination than we were when we started.

After the good (albeit chilly) back road ride to Pendleton, we spent the night, after which Daryl started heading south back to Napa, and I headed north into the cold, windy, drizzly pass on I-90. Great to be home again.

Random thoughts -

Gert's still humming away in great comfort and with great reliability - the clock ticked over 35,000 miles during the trip.

In Idaho, there are signs saying simply "Look out for Stock." Wild-stock? Soup-stock? Wood-stock? Live-stock? They have it all covered.

Speaking of animals and seeing the painted white lines to prevent "stock" from crossing - I'm thinking we're going to save a lot of money on our next horse pasture. Rather than a fence, I'm just going to paint a bunch of lines on the ground. Will look neat from an airplane too.

I know, time to sign off !!!!!

Until the next Wild Hog outing...

Regards,

Dad / Brian

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