

Washington State Chapter August, 1997

June 21 - Sol Duc (or not) - By Dan Meekhof

Dan Hytry, Jim Holzberger, Peter Broda, and myself met on a rainy Saturday when we were supposed to have my motorcycle camping event.

I rode my bike even though the weather sucked just because it has been ages since I've been on a club ride and I didn't want to pass up any opportunity to ride. I don't know what possessed Jim and Peter to bring their bikes in such fowl weather but they did. Dan did the sensible thing and came in his Pathfinder.

Since it didn't look like we were going to ride we spent an extra long time doing the familiar motorcycle chat at Denny's. When it was time to go we noticed that it wasn't raining at the moment so the three of us who came on bikes decided to try for a short ride.

We took US-101 from Olympia to SR-106 which hugs a branch of Hood Canal. It didn't rain and the highway was both twisty and scenic. Not bad. It was too urban for any serious sport riding but it was pleasant. I thought the original plan was to take some of my favorite roads near Port of Dewatto, but for some mysterious reason, once we got into Belfair, Jim told me that they wanted to go straight to Brothers Honda/Ducati dealership even though we would go right past excellent twisties.

We did have a lot of fun on Old Belfair Hwy. and the mechanic at Brothers gave us all kinds of info. on hopping up a 916 so it was still fun. I tried to get to those cool roads on the way back but when I got into Belfair this time it was pouring down rain so again I just rode right by some of my favorite roads without riding them.

June 27-30 - Western Oregon Coast

One word describes this trip...OUTSTANDING!
We should all move to Oregon, quit our jobs, and ride for the rest of our lives.

Due to the length of this ride (4 days), meeting places were setup along the route and people dropped in and out as their schedules allowed.

Chris Harnish, Kirby Drawbaugh, Peter Broda, Theresa Scheerens and myself met Friday morning at our usual Denny's. Jim Holzberger was going to meet us in Seaside that night, and Bob Kramer and Dan Meekhof were meeting us in Bend on Saturday night.

Everything started off as planned - except for one minor (actually pretty major) mishap. The curse of Mt. St. Helens strikes again. As we had finished up 'sport-touring' Mt. St. Helens via FR-25, and were heading into Cougar along FR-90, Chris lost control of his brand new VFR. Chris is fine (I know that was the first thing you were wondering), but the bike had sustained serious front end damage and was unable to proceed due to a pronounced limp in the front wheel. The guard rail took a bite out of Chris's front tire like Tyson did to Holyfield's ear!

We spent 2 hours taking care of Chris's situation but all went relatively smoothly. Having lost Chris from our pack, we proceeded to Seaside. Peter was staying in Portland, visiting a friend, and would return to meet us in Seaside, Saturday morning bringing Courtland (Court) on his BMW R1100RT. Court would be our tour guide for the better part of Saturday. Once in Seaside, Jim had joined us and we enjoyed dinner to a sunset over the Pacific Ocean.

Saturday, Court chaperoned us down the coast taking SR-53. If this was any indication of things to come - WOW! We continued south along roads that paralleled US-101, trying to stay out of the path of motor-homes and punks in vans that thought it would be fun to treat Kirby as a moving target by throwing their refuse out the driver's window as he passed. Once we got to Newport, we ate lunch at a tavern that I would recommend that you DON'T go to, and Kirby decided that he would head home. Having had a lot of time to think about what happened to Chris, it started taking its toll on Kirby and he decided that he wasn't enjoying himself anymore. Court also peeled off, and that left Peter, Jim, and me (with Theresa on the rear seat).

We were running way behind for our ETA in Bend of 6 pm, so we picked up the pace and made a straight run from Waldport taking SR-34 to Lebanon and US-20 to Bend. As luck would have it - it rained on us from Sweethome to Sisters and the roads became very

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slick if you were running MEZ2's on the rear. My Battlax (tire) stuck fine so I can't relate to Jim and Peter.

We found Bob and Dan in Bend, got rooms (two of the last three) at the Red Lion, and relaxed in the hot tub after a long day of riding and the last two hours in the pouring rain. I figured about 400-450 miles that day.

Sunday, we met up again at our hotel, and Jim had decided that he would head northward with Bob and Dan. That left just Peter and myself to cruise south to Crater Lake, which was my objective on this trip. We did the loop around the crater, and headed north to SR-138 and took that west to Roseburg. I stopped in Eugene, and Peter again headed for Portland. Monday turned out to be a freeway drone home for me, while Peter hadn't yet had enough, so he toured Mt. Rainier and SR-410. Peter had 1700 total miles, while I came in at 1350 miles with a passenger.

We all took different routes through Oregon, so we scouted a lot of good roads. Ones worthy of mentioning are SR-53 from Necanicum to Mohler, SR-34 from Waldport to Philomath, SR-138 from Glide to Crater Lake including the loop around the Crater, and SR-242 from Sisters to Belknap Springs. There were too many other good roads to mention, but these are an absolute must. If you're anywhere near these areas, make the effort to get on one of them!

July 12 - Ride to Winthrop

Do you ever experience Deja-Vu? Didn't we just do this ride on June 14th?

Yes, we did this ride, again. Many different people showed this time for the long trip. I must have made it sound pretty good in the last newsletter. Trust me, I understated the fun...

Attendees were Kevin (900SP) and John Jaquith (Triumph T595), Jennifer Wosachlo (EX500), Scott Sullivan (ZX-7R), Larry Dunn (CBR1000), Chris Harnish (on his newly replaced VFR), Mark Grabrick (900RR), Pat Taylor (VFR), Bill Overson (Concourse - good to see you come out for a ride), Stan Kendall (ST - this time we didn't lose him, though he turned around halfway), Elbert Silbaugh (VFR) and Bryce Ulrich (ST - who showed for breakfast but didn't opt for the ride), Mat McDanold (CBR1000 - who showed, but didn't eat or ride), and myself (900RR) with Theresa Scheerens. Many of the regulars were prepping their bikes for the Montana trip next weekend.

The ride consisted of exactly the same route used in June. The weather was clear and prime for riding. We did however see a little more enforcement in the expected areas which means that summer has officially started and riders should stay alert. Some main hot spots were between Wenatchee and Cashmere Along US-2. If you think there is only one patrol for this short stretch, you'll be unpleasantly surprised. This road IS heavily patrolled with multiple cruisers. We encountered one more crossing Blewett Pass in a Ford Bronco and he merely shook his index finger at us as we went by. He knew that we knew that he knew. Anyway, thanks for the "warning" officer friendly...

Speaking of Deja-Vu, aren't we taking this road next week on our way to Spokane for the BSR (Big Sky Run)? I guess we can't get enough of a good thing!? I can't wait for the ride (and my vacation).

July 18-20 (and beyond) - BSR - Montanathon

The “and beyond” stems from some of our regular riders making a week out of the BSR and taking a vacation to enjoy the roads of Montana, Alberta, and British Columbia through July 27th. I know the BSR will be covered in the STARreview for the national HSTA population, but because it is a local event, I will provide details from my point of view as well as a journal of our experiences that we encountered.

Mat McDanold, Bob Kramer, Peter Broda, and myself took 10 days of vacation and planned on touring Yellowstone, and then up north to Banff and Jasper after the BSR was over. Chris Harnish started with us on Friday and separated on Wednesday, while Jim Holzberger met up with us on Tuesday, in Missoula and rode with us the rest of the week. Brian Gershon rode over to Spokane with us, but met up with his friend and Kirby started off with us on his way to Chicago.

Day 1: Seattle to Spokane - 514 miles - we followed the North Cascades Highway (SR-20) to Kettle Falls, and proceeded south on SR-25, meandering towards Spokane. Highlights to this route are crossing Loup Loup summit between Twisp and Okanogan. The roads were clear of gravel, and smooth enough to get the pegs down on my 900RR.

Once in Spokane, we hurried over to Rod Eastwood's place for the BSR. We arrived after the food was pretty much gone, but we got to chat with fellow riders from across the country and couldn't help but notice the number of ST's and VFR's in the club. Chris showed off his VFR and I was surprised to see I had the only RR, and Peter and Kirby had the only two Ducks.

Day 2: Spokane to Missoula - 381 miles - by way of Lolo Pass (US-12). We started south along the east side of Coeur d'Alene Lake along SR-97. This road was nothing short of excellent with one pitfall - No guardrails. If you blow a corner, you get to swim! We worked our way down SR's -3, -6, -9, -3, and -7 to Orofino. After crossing about 2 miles of construction to get to Orofino, we ate, and the next sight we saw was a sign that read, “Winding Highway Next 77 Miles”! That statement just about says it all...

Once in Missoula, off to Jim Iverson's place for dinner. More gabbing went on, and prizes were drawn. Elbert asked for nominations for a goof award, and I, being the smart-ass that I am, quickly nominated Chris for his ability to wad up a bike. Elbert replied that the nominee would have to represent someone/thing that happened that weekend - so I restrained from nominating Chris once again.

Day 3: Missoula to West Yellowstone - 375 miles - Heading southeast toward W. Yellowstone, we crossed the Continental Divide, Montana/Idaho border,

and Lost Trail Pass in the same left hand corner - and what a corner it was! This would've been a great opportunity to take pictures of each other, but there would be many photo opportunities later on the trip. West Yellowstone - Elevation 6,666. (just thought I'd mention that...)

Day 4: West Yellowstone to Billings - 230 miles - If you asked us which road was the best road of our trip, you would get one answer from all of us - Bear Tooth Pass! If you have internet access - check out our website for a photo of the east side of the pass. WARNING - Not for the faint of heart! Peter was nursing a rear tire by this point, but still had enough rubber (sort of) to make it back to Missoula to get it replaced. The temperature when we got to Billings was a scorching 94 degrees!

Day 5: Billings to Missoula - 399 miles - Peter, concerned with his tire, left Billings at 6 am to make sure that the traffic on I-90 was minimal, and that the roads were as cool as could be so that he could maintain a slow speed for 350 I-90 miles to Missoula. After stopping at various dealerships along the way, and being advised to not proceed on the rear tire, he pressed on to Missoula in hopes of finding a dealer that had the rubber and had the tools to mount it on his Ducati. He pulls into Missoula, and the service guy took one look at his tire and instantly calls everyone in the dealership to come take a look for themselves. The comment of the day was, “That tire is so thin, you can see the air on the inside!”

The rest of us chose to take SR-3, north from Billings to US-12 and then west to Avon at which time we caught SR-141 to SR-200 to Missoula. If you've done these roads before, you know why I didn't mention them earlier - l o n g b o r i n g s t r a i g h t s. I'd swear I fell asleep and woke up 50 miles down the road still upright. Temperatures this day ran from 85-95, another hot day in the sun.

Jim Holzberger and Sam Nelson joined us, as we had previously arranged to meet in Missoula. Sam, riding a ZX-11, was eager to take Peter up on a quest to discover what the top speed of the two bikes were. I was looking forward to trying to keep up. The next day would tell...

Day 6: Missoula to Fernie, BC - 445 miles - can't say much for this day either - again it was pretty boring with straight roads and few kinks. Sam Nelson drew first blood by passing all of us from the back of the pack and setting the pace. Soon after, Peter shot to the front, and I was left in third position. What the heck, let's see what the 900RR can do...

Without telling - Sam went VERY fast, Peter only slightly slower, and I was right behind them. Fast enough for me! It's hard to get a true speed with

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saddlebags hanging off the rear seat. (I bet you thought I would give it up, didn't you?)

Glacier National Park was a let down for me. The scenery wasn't that impressive, and the roads were not anything special. I would not recommend going out of your way to make it through the park.

Day 7: Fernie, BC to Banff, AB - 249 miles - Banff National Park is beautiful, and given the chance, I would visit it again, spending more time there. Hwy 93 into the park was truly spectacular and the world famous, Banff Springs Hotel, has to be visited for its historical value.

Day 8: Banff, AB to Jasper, AB - 228 miles - As we pulled out of Banff, we decided that we would make the side trip to Lake Louise to eat breakfast. Chateau Lake Louise had the best food we ate on the entire trip, and this was just a breakfast buffet! The service was impeccable, and the meal was not outrageously priced as one would expect at such a posh resort. After breakfast, we took another side trip to Lake Moraine - truly gorgeous. I'm running out of accolades for this trip - I may have to re-use some!

Wow, Hwy 93 never stopped impressing us! Ice fields, glaciers, twisty mountain roads with impressive climbs, wildlife all over the place, and the Rocky Mountains on both sides are only a few things you'll see along this road. You can't help but stop every 5 minutes to take a picture of something different - or the same sight from a different angle! The stunning rock formations make you wonder why you haven't been here before! Speed was no longer an issue - today was a short day, and picture opportunities were a plenty.

Once in Jasper, we checked into our hotel, and went back into town for dinner. A guy that we had been seeing all day rolls into town and asked us if we had been stopped along the way. We replied, "No" and he informed us that he was sighted for speeding 30km outside of town. We laughed (to ourselves) and again, I without thinking before speaking, said, "Better you than us!", knowing that we had come through that area only 10 minutes before him. It was the kind of situation that even had we got a ticket, we wouldn't have minded because we were so awestruck with the beauty of the land.

Day 9: Jasper, AB to Kamloops, BC - 294 miles - The ride was still good, keeping the speed down due to the fact we were in Canada and didn't want to support the economy other than by buying expensive gas. We arrived in Kamloops after only 6 hours of riding and Peter had decided that he would shoot straight through to Seattle. I was looking forward to taking a

long nap in Kamloops after staying up late the night before.

We went out for dinner, and then out for a drink. Wouldn't you know it, the Hell's Angels showed up in Kamloops and decided that they would drink at the same place we were at. We picked up our multi-colored, full-face helmets, and walked out the door. The police that were babysitting the other bikers outside, didn't even give us a second look as we walked down the street.

Day 10: Kamloops, BC to Seattle - 331 miles - Finally, the last stretch on our journey home. We took Hwy 5A out of Kamloops to Merritt. Highly recommended! We followed the Coquihalla Hwy and darn near froze our butts off going over the pass at 8am. We had decided that we wanted to get home early on Sunday, and therefore we hit the road at 6am. We stopped in Hope for breakfast, and from there, it was a straight shot home.

Jim had recognized a friend from college who was working as a border guard, so we passed the border relatively quickly and painlessly.

If you are wondering about the total mileage, no need - that is a statistic I'm proud to share - 3446 miles in 10 days, and only about 15 total miles of rain over the entire trip. We spent a total of 82 hours on the road, including meal and fuel stops. One piece of advice that should be obvious on any long trip - check the construction conditions along your route - it may prove to save you time, and worries. If Peter had rode the way we did to Missoula, he would not have made it!

I would like to give personal kudos to Bob Kramer, who provided awesome trip routing; to the hotels that put up with us (I mean that put us up); and to myself for making quality reservations. (I'm merely repeating what people told me.) I believe that this is a vacation that no one will soon forget. And on that note - see you on the next ride!

Upcoming Events

August 9 - Mitzel's in Puyallup - 8 am
Ride to Mt. St. Helens

August 15-17 - KOA, Cascade Locks OR - 8/15 eve.
Oregon Camp-Out

August 23-24 - Denny's in Olympia (Black Lake) - 9 am
Campout to Sol Duc (rescheduled)

Non-Club Ride, but you're welcome to join me...
Aug 30-Sept 1 - Denny's in Renton (Kennydale) - 3 am
Reno/Lake Tahoe, Nevada (Yes, 3 A M)