

A Tale of Three Guys Bicycling the Pacific Coast from Canada to Mexico



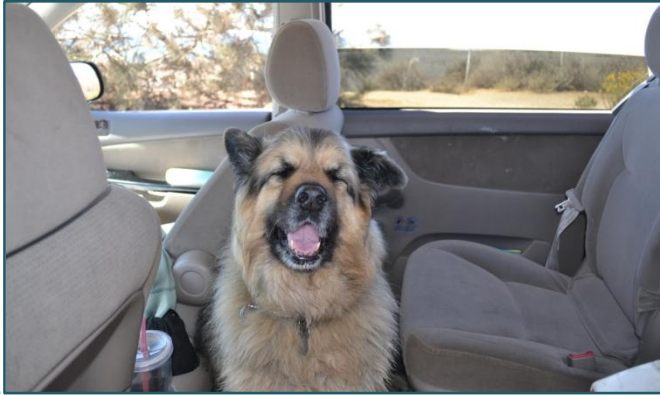
All Five of Us at the US/Mexican Border Fence – Pacific Ocean

Created by Chico Perkins
(Back-Seat SAG Wagon Driver-In-Chief)

August 31 - September 30, 2013

Chico's Log: From Concept to Reality

I'd like to introduce myself. I am **Chico Perkins**, a 12-year-old 78-pound Samoyed-Shepherd-Etc mix who arrived at the Perkins' home in 2002, delivered by their daughter Lena after she "rescued" me. On this trip, I am also the **Back-Seat-Driver-In-Chief**.



I'm not sure when I first heard Dale saying he wanted to ride from Canada to Mexico. It had something to do with wanting to bicycle across the country – and then realizing that there is a whole lot of boring out there.



I do remember that Jeanne bought Dale a book on *Bicycling the Pacific Coast* in 2006. Then Jeanne and I SAGged Dale and their son Kevin for the southern half of Oregon as a "test." It was also a

disaster – with Jeanne, Kevin, Dale, and I all having separate needs and expectations. Thus, any plan of a long-distance ride was put on hold.

Then in 2007 Dale started having problems with arthritis in his knee. He cut back on his riding, and began to take 2-day rides instead of 3-day rides. That seemed to make a difference, but that was no way to prepare for a 30-to-45-day ride from Canada to Mexico. Jeanne suggested that we do the ride in pieces – a British Columbia loop – a Washington segment – an Oregon segment – and then the California Coast in two segments. Dale's response? "That doesn't count."

But then the options for his knee changed, and his friend (college buddy, fellow cyclist, and orthopedic surgeon) suggested a shot of "Syn-Visc." Voilà! The shot would be given about two weeks before the ride – and the trip *should* be feasible!

Dale put the word out and recruited two strong riders, who, coincidentally, did not know each other until they met at our house for a final planning meeting and test ride!

Kevin McTighe is a friend of Dale's through the Veloraptors, a bike club in Oakland's Montclair District that Dale has ridden with. He has extensive



long-distance riding experience, including riding cross-country last summer.



Bob Liles is a Dow Chemical retiree whom Dale met at Dow and has kept in touch with.

Dale had the shot in his knee August 20 and crossed his fingers as to its efficacy. It should be

noted that there was never any doubt about Kevin's or Bob's ability to complete this ride. Their long-distance, multi-week cycling "resumes" are quite impressive. Dale, on the other hand, was much more of a question mark. First, there was the question of how effective the injection would be for his knee. Second, partly due to the impairment of his knee, the last time he had ridden for more than three consecutive days of more than 50 miles each was in 1967!! (He admitted this last fact to himself and his teammates about seven days into the ride.)

Day 1 - Chico's Log: Driving North to Grants Pass, Oregon

Loading the Car: Dale and Jeanne started loading the van with all sorts of weird stuff yesterday – including LOTS of dog food for me. This morning Kevin McTighe and Bob Liles came over and soon there were three bicycles on the top of our van. I was really scared that I would be left behind, so I insisted on climbing in the van when there were still more suitcases to be loaded. But I got out so they could take my picture with my “flock.”



Stopping Outside of Dunsmuir: Jeanne promised to drive the van from Canada to Mexico as long as the three guys let her take some pictures. One of those places was along the Upper Sacramento River near Dunsmuir. She thinks Castle Crags are beautiful.



Stopping at Tou Valle State Park: Outside of Medford, we stopped at this state park on the Rogue River, and the next thing I knew, Dale, Kevin and Bob deserted us to ride their bicycles to the town of Rogue River near Grants Pass, Oregon. Jeanne and I took a walk, and I got to go for a short swim.



Brew Pub: Bob, Kevin, and Dale decided they needed beer having ridden for 20 miles in 95-degree heat, so we all drove to Grants Pass to the Wild River Brew Pub.



Day 2 - Chico's Log: Continuing North to Near Tacoma, Washington

Leaving Grants Pass: Jeanne was sad to leave the Rogue River, but everyone else was excited to drive north and have cooler weather!



Crossing the Willamette River at Portland: Portland has a bunch of rivers, for it is parked just where the Willamette joins the Columbia. My people claimed it was gorgeous, but I had more important things to do – like sleep in the back of the van.



Bicycling through Woods: After spending hours in the van on I-5, we headed east and go on some side roads. Jeanne and I took a walk, and, just like yesterday, I got to go for a short swim.



Just like yesterday, however, the guys left a perfectly good van to ride their bicycles while we drove in comfort. Meanwhile, everyone got really excited about the views of a REALLY tall mountain named Mt. Rainier.



Yet Another Brew Pub: Right across from our hotel in Federal Way near Seattle, the guys found yet another brew pub. This time, because there was no outside seating, I had to stay in the van. What treatment! And they think they deserve a brew pub just because they rode through gorgeous scenery for 30 miles! I plan to make them work harder tomorrow to earn their beer!

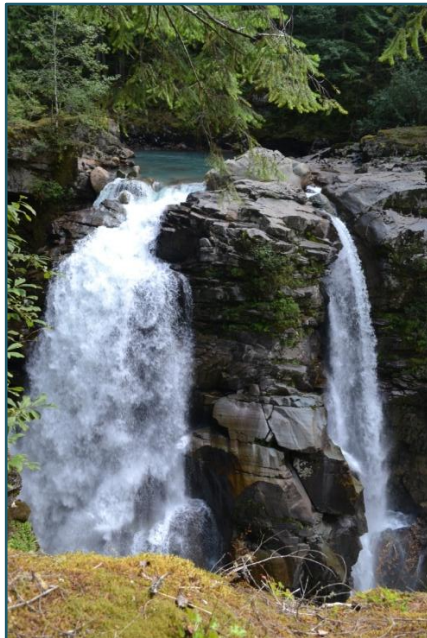


Day 3 - Chico's Log: Driving North Past Mt. Baker to Near Vancouver, BC

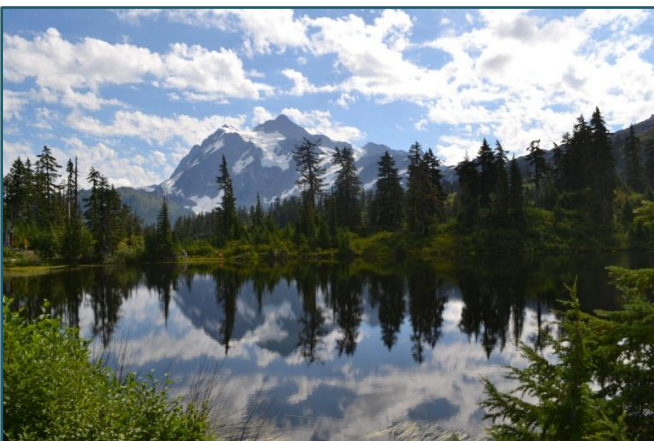
Blasting Past Seattle: We didn't leave the Interstate as we blasted past Seattle. Dale rolled down the window and Jeanne took the picture!



Driving the Mt. Baker Scenic Byway: We decided that riding bicycles in Vancouver would not be as much fun as seeing some northern Cascade Mountains, so we drove up the Mt. Baker Scenic Byway. Our first stop was "stunning" Nooksack Falls.



Next we stopped at Highwood Lake – and then at Picture Lake and took the short walk around it. I got to wade in a miniature stream, so I was very happy.



We drove to the end of the road at 5,141-foot Artist's Point. Here we took a 2-mile round-trip walk on the Artist's Ridge Trail with lots of rock stairs that I had to hike up and down. But there were lots of small lakes for me to wade in, and great views of Mt. Shuksan, even though Mt. Baker had lots of clouds in front of it!



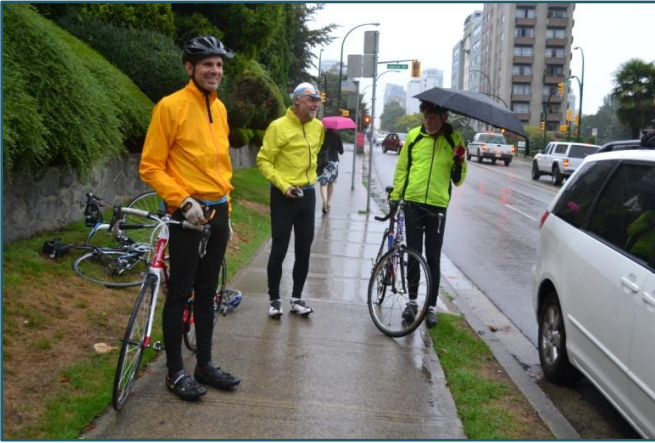
The Downhill Bike Ride: After much discussion about how they did not deserve to coast downhill if they had not ridden their bikes to the top of the byway, Dale, Kevin and Bob decided to ride down anyway! It took Jeanne and I longer to get down because we stopped at a campground to see if it would be fun to camp here. The Silver Fir Campground is gorgeous, with almost all the campsites on the river.



Later, after we drove into Canada to the outskirts of Vancouver, I said they did not deserve beer for riding 24 miles – all downhill – so they had dessert instead! Tomorrow they plan to start their big ride about 8 a.m. in Vancouver's Stanley Park.

Day 4 - Chico's Log: The BIG RIDE Finally Starts

Starting the BIG RIDE in Stanley Park, Vancouver: Dale, Kevin and Bob decided to bicycle out of town, breaking their pledge of "we don't start rides in the rain."



Our First Ferry – Horseshoe Bay to Gibson: Everyone but me got to ride on the nice decks of the ferry and was able to dry out from the rain. I couldn't join them because dogs are only allowed on the vehicle deck.



Winegarden Waterfront Park, Gibson: Jeanne took me on a fun walk along the Gibson waterfront to make up for leaving me in the van during the ferry ride.



Davis Bay Waterfront Park, Sechelt: My favorite walk was along the waterfront path next to Davis Bay. The bike riders said they also enjoyed this sunny area.



Enjoying the Sunshine Coast Resort: All of us like this beautiful resort on the water at Madeira Park. I decided to take a nap on the deck while Dale kayaked in the bay.

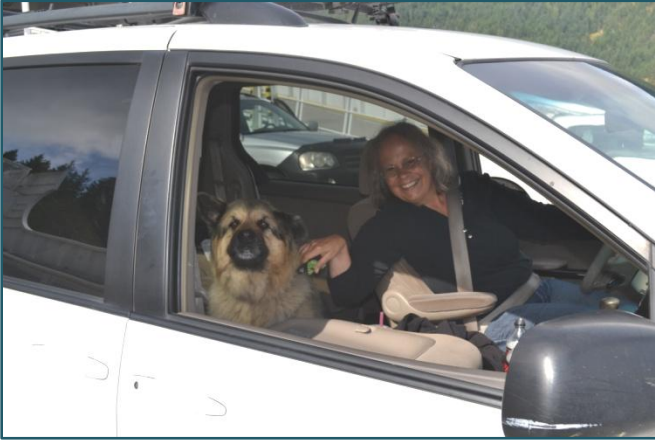


The guys abandoned their bikes to drink beers – celebrating their 57 miles and 4,100 feet of climbing!



Day 5 - Chico's Log: North to Hwy. 101 "Mile 0" and Two Ferries

Jeanne and I Are a GREAT Team: Jeanne drives the van, while I look out the window or sleep in the back.



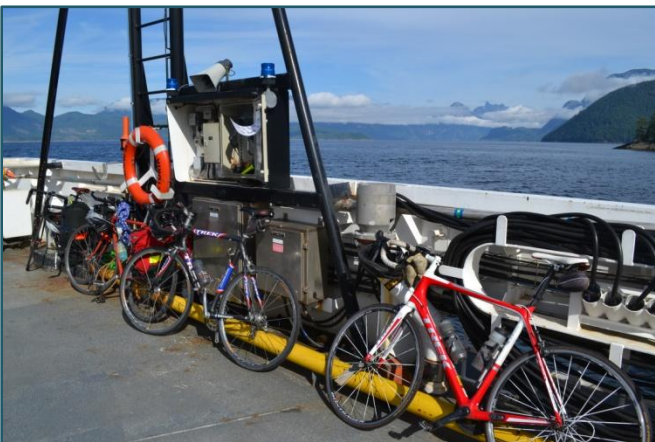
Saltery Bay Provincial Park - Mermaid Bay: The guys are riding an average of 15 miles an hour, so Jeanne and I had time to take a walk to the coast and sniff sea stars.



The View – The views of the British Columbia coastline are great as we all headed NORTH toward the north end of the Pacific Coast Highway – Highway 101. Bob and Dale are jealous of Kevin's calves! Much of the road has a shoulder.



Madeira Park to the Sechelt-Powell River Ferry – Jeanne stayed in the car with me on this ferry ride, while Dale, Kevin and Bob walked around, leaving us in charge of their bicycles.



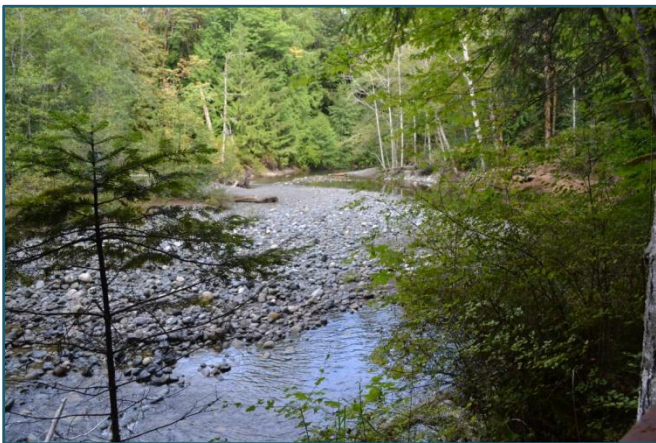
Lund – Highway 101's Mile Zero! We hadn't planned to go all the way to Lund, but we decided the guys needed a photo at the northern-most point of their ride.



After 63 miles and 4,600 feet of climbing today, we are finally heading south to Mexico!

Day 6 - Chico's Log: South Along the East Side of Vancouver Island – Courtenay to Nanaimo

Crossing Narrow Bridges Over Special Creeks: The creeks in this area are all protected as spawning areas – and there are dozens – all crossed by narrow bridges without a hint of a shoulder for bicycles!



Views of the Strait of Georgia: We all enjoyed the views across the Strait to the mainland of British Columbia.



Deep Bay looked shallow to me.



Lunch for the Riders: Dale's quest for a Dairy Queen ended well when the guys found one on their bike route (kudos to Bob and his Garmin navigation gizmo). Bob opted for the bakery, but Dale was in heaven with his Choco Cherry Love Blizzard. He resisted the urge to explore whether they offer the local delicacies (oysters and mussels) into their Blizzard menu!

A LONG Side Trip for Lunch: Jeanne and I decided to drive to the west side of Vancouver Island. First, we walked to Upper and Lower Little Qualicum Falls.



Port Alberni, on the west coast at the head of one of the fjords, smelled like fish to me!



The Stats: The guys hit a rain shower for the last 10 miles of their ride, and beat us to our hotel on Long Lake in Nanaimo – having ridden 65 miles, but climbing “only” about 2,500 feet.

U-turn madness! Jeanne is struggling to navigate on her own (she didn’t ask me) without her cell phone navigation “crutch” in Canada. She made so many U-turns as we circled in on the hotel I was getting dizzy! The last U-turn was a near-miss followed by being pulled over by a local policewoman for an illegal U-turn. I looked my cutest and Jeanne explained that it wasn’t signed - and we got away with a warning. Something about USA and Canada U-turn laws being different – and no U-turns are allowed unless the sign says you can make one! WHEW!!

On the way back we stopped to see an 800-year-old Douglas fir – and got rained on in the rainforest!



The Ultimatum: I almost got fired today for talking at length about our adventures and barely mentioning the boys on their bikes (they seem to think this is a bike trip log!) and for arriving with Jeanne at the hotel 3 hours after the three bicyclists, so Jeanne and I promise to be most attentive tomorrow.

Day 7 - Chico's Log: Nanaimo to Sydney on Vancouver Island Via Saltspring Island

South from Nanaimo: We head south along the coast, but spend too much time on commercial strips with stoplights or on highways with BIG trucks to Crofton.

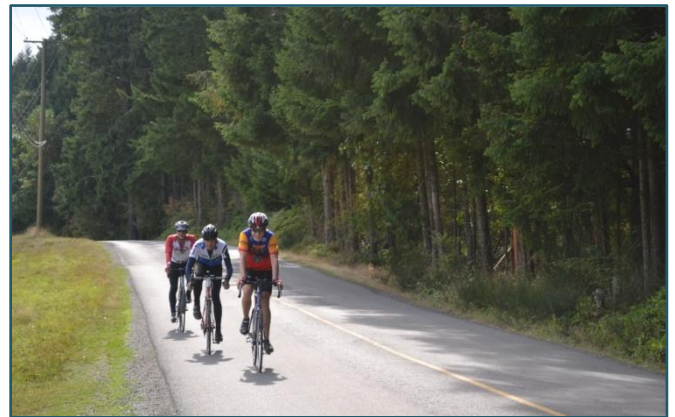
On one side of the town is a paper mill – and on the other a beautiful boardwalk where dogs can sniff and smell ocean smells as long as they like!



Ferry to Saltspring Island – We take the ferry from Crofton to the north end of Saltspring Island so the three bicyclists can get on more rural roads.



But rural also means steeper (but short) ups and downs.



The main village on the island is Ganges with an active artist community and a small port.



Back to Vancouver Island: We take another ferry from the south end of Saltspring Island back to Vancouver Island. After 65 miles and 4,200 feet of climbing, Kevin and Dale joined Jeanne and I to celebrate by visiting Butchart Gardens. Yes, Butchart Gardens allows dogs! There were lots of beautiful places to sniff and pee!



Day 8 – Chico's Log: Victoria and an International Ferry to Washington State

Wonderful Weather: We woke up this morning to what I thought was beautiful weather – for a cloud was actually on the ground, complete with light rain and 10 feet of visibility. Everything smells so fresh with a bit of dew on it. There were puddles everywhere for me to lick. But the three cyclists moaned and groaned and decided to postpone any riding until the rain quit.

Victoria: We all drove together from Sydney to Victoria to check out the sights and smells of the Inner Harbor, including Parliament and the surrounding area.



Seaside Bike Route BACK to Sydney: During lunch, the rain stopped, so they got on their bikes and headed back to Sydney along the coast. Part way back, everyone got excited because the sun came out.



An International Ferry: We caught the afternoon ferry to Friday Harbor in the San Juan Islands and we all were formerly readmitted to the USA. The three guys were shamed when they met three women cyclists (one a friend of Bob's) also riding from Canada to Mexico – *camping* and each carrying 40-50 pounds of gear!



Day 9 – Chico’s Log: Washington’s San Juan Islands to Anacortes

Restlessness: I am not sure whether it was because they felt guilty having **only** ridden 32 miles and climbed 1,700 feet yesterday, or because Jeanne and I are hauling their gear in our van. But they woke up this morning ready to charge! (It couldn’t have had anything to do with the weather and scenery - and wanting to see as much as possible. I prefer to **smell** places rather than look at them.) ANYHOW, they rode a total of 84 miles and climbed 7,400 feet today before riding into our hotel in Anacortes.

San Juan Island: The center of the island is quite rural.



But the edges have more resorts and housing.



San Juan Islands National Historic Park/ Monument actually allows dogs on the trails! American Camp and English Camp have been preserved from when these two countries almost went to war when an American shot an Englishman’s pig because it was rooting in his potato patch. (It was really because both countries claimed the San Juan Islands.)



Two Lighthouses: Jeanne loves lighthouses because they are in beautiful places. For me, they are a great excuse to get out of the car and smell the ocean. We found one at Cattle Point at the south end of the island, and another at Lime Kiln State Park.



Orcas Island: Once you pay to get to the islands, you can “island-hop” for free. The three cyclists took advantage of this and caught a ferry to Orcas for more miles (and scenery). Bob was the first to see a starfish almost three feet across! I am amazed that they had time to stop for anything!

Ferry to Anacortes: The ferry rides in this area have a moving panorama of dozens of islands. I stay in the car for them, however, and catch up on my sleep.



Day 10 – Chico's Log: South on Washington's Hood Canal

Fog: We woke up this morning to a marvelous display of fog. Sounds are muffled and smells are more intense. I love fog.



The Final Ferry: After 32 miles, we arrived at the ferry to Port Townsend. The captain does not appreciate fog – and the ferry for 9:30 was cancelled, as was the 10:15 ferry. FINALLY, he saw the light (or at least some sky) and the 11 a.m. ferry ran, enabling us to continue with our day. That was the last of 8 ferries for Jeanne and I – and the last of 9 ferries for Dale, Bob, and Kevin. There was sunshine when we got to Port Townsend!



I have a new friend: Cindy, one of the three women riding with all her gear and camping, got sick – so she rode in our van and is sleeping in a motel tonight. She is really nice and scratches behind my ears!

The Hood Canal: Riding beside the Hood Canal, the waterway at the base of the Olympic Mountains, is wonderful. Amazingly, this stretch of Hwy. 101 is quiet.



The Record! Today was a record for the cyclists on this trip - 112 miles and 6,250 feet of climbing.

Day 11 – Chico’s Log: West to Grays Harbor and the Washington Coast

More time with my new friend: Cindy was still not feeling well, so she rode with me in the back seat to make sure she didn’t give her sinus infection to Jeanne. I slept with my paws on her feet most of the day, like a good Therapy Dog.

Lake Sylvia State Park: The ride route today was lined by a dozen state parks. Jeanne and I took a walk around Lake Sylvia while the three guys concentrated on riding.



Grays Harbor Adventures: We hit the coastline at Aberdeen on Grays Harbor. Jeanne and I explored Aberdeen and Hoquiam where rivers come in to form this large estuary. We spent lots of time trying to get our GPS to find the *Lady Washington*, a reproduction of a tall ship in the historic harbor, while being led on gravel lanes and dirt roads to an open but “closed” gate. Meanwhile, the three cyclists were being led astray by their GPS, including getting led on gravel lanes and dirt roads to a locked gate!



Later, we drove along the south edge of the estuary to the fishing harbor and resort of Westport.



Oysters: This territory is home to oysters – lots and lots of oysters. We even passed Brady’s oyster farm. Fittingly, Dale and Bob had oysters for dinner.



Tires: We passed the three guys sitting next to the road while Dale changed a flat tire. He had two today – and a total of four during this trip. Bob hasn’t had any and Kevin has had two, so Dale is ahead. Yet they managed to ride 106 miles and climb 3,000 feet!



Day 12 – Chico's Log: Washington's Willapa Bay to the Northern Oregon Coast

It's back to just Jeanne and I in the car: AND about a million gnats and mosquitoes! Each oyster drinks about 25 gallons of sea water a day to suck out the algae and plankton it loves. Jeanne wishes they ate gnats! The views of Willapa Bay are beautiful, though, and the cyclists claim they are riding too fast to get bitten!



A LONG bridge: The three cyclists claimed they wanted to actually ride across the Columbia River on a bridge 4½ miles long. I checked with them afterwards and they said it wasn't too bad – EXCEPT for the tunnel right BEFORE the bridge and the construction ON the bridge. Apparently there were a couple of nasty expansion joints and lots of debris. The construction zone flag lady took their picture 200 feet above the river!



Lewis and Clark's Winter Fort: The National Park Service lets us dogs visit Fort Clatsop! I think it is in honor of Lewis' Newfoundland dog *Seaman*, who made the trip here – and back – with the explorers.



The Stats: The last two days took their toll on Dale's legs, so yesterday the guys decided that they would "only" ride between South Bend, Washington and Cannon Beach, Oregon. This shorter day of 84 miles and 3,300 feet of climbing was designed to give Dale's strained hamstrings a break. All of us were concerned that the situation would worsen if Dale's legs didn't heal. Bob and Kevin also took the lead starting today.

Day 13 – Chico’s Log: More Adventures on the Northern Oregon Coast

Weather Changes: The weather here can’t make up its mind. Sometimes it is foggy – sometimes not – and mostly somewhere in between. This morning we could see Cannon Beach from Ecola State Park – but just barely.



The roads here drop straight to the sea – an incentive for the bicyclists to watch where they are going!



Cows: As soon as we arrived in Tillamook County, I could smell cows. I love to chase cows, but I also love cheese – and apparently these cows make great cheese.



I got to taste some special “squeaky” cheese curds.

Capes and Beaches: We drove – and the cyclists rode – the Three Capes Scenic Byway south of Tillamook. We even found each other at Cape Meares!



The landscape alternates between steep capes and flat beaches.



Today’s Stats: 78 miles and 5,100 feet of climbing between Cannon Beach, Oregon and Pacific City, Oregon.

Day 14 – Chico’s Log: Central Oregon Coast Featuring Devil’s Punchbowl and Devil’s Churn

Weather: OH, I love this fog. It makes the trees and ferns grow right up next to the road – and to the trails I get to walk on. Two ground squirrels even jumped in front of me before they saw me! The cyclists say the visibility is usually not a problem. Bob, who prefers warmer weather, has been wearing his tights almost every day. The scenery at Boiler Bay is definitely lovely, particularly in the fog.



Later we met a guy at the overlook for Devil’s Punchbowl with a camera around his neck who wanted to know how long the fog would be around. He was not amused when we said “until it rains.” He acted like there was nothing worthy of a picture – when our lovely calves were available – so Jeanne took a photo instead!



The Road: Jeanne got in trouble today because she didn’t warn the cyclists about all the bridges they would be crossing in Oregon – many of which have less of a shoulder than the long one over the Columbia outside Astoria. There have also been more tunnels, but they are getting more used to those – as long as Dale resists riding on the “sidewalk” and actually rides on the road. The drivers are supposed to go only 30 miles an hour

when there are bicyclists on a bridge or in a tunnel. Most do – the problem is some don’t. Much of the road has a decent shoulder, but the pavement can rough at times.



Today’s Stats: 73 miles and 3,600 feet of climbing between Pacific City, Oregon and Yachats, Oregon.

A BONUS: Since we are staying in a hotel in Yachats, the cyclists changed into street clothes and took a walk to Devil’s Churn and Spouting Horn at Cape Perpetua a couple of miles away.



Day 15 – Chico's Log: Central Oregon's Roads and Dunes to Coos Bay, Oregon

Sea Lions: People say sea lions bark like dogs, but they don't sound a bit like dogs to me – they just make quite a racket!



Road Pavement: The roads have varied from good to not so good until we hit Lane County. You'd think that US 101 would be fairly standard – but the paving crews in Lane County must have been the low bidder – and love patchwork quilting – because we've never seen such a mess. The shoulders were particularly bad – not so much because they were narrow, but because of the pavement quality. Then we hit Douglas County and it was fine.

Obstacles: We went through another tunnel and across some more bridges, one of which had no shoulder at all!



Dunes: We have hit the Oregon Dunes. I love dunes and soft sand. My big paws think sand is just dry snow. Jeanne wasn't going to go on this fun loop walk in the dunes, but I pulled on the leash and made her go. The trail was marked with posts to show the way, but I didn't need them. I'm pretty sore now, but really happy.



Today's Stats: 78 miles and 3,800 feet of climbing between Yachats, Oregon and Coos Bay, Oregon.

Day 16 – Chico’s Log: Southern Oregon’s Coastal Fog

Morning: We headed out from Coos Bay to Charleston and the State Parks of Cape Arago. Jeanne told me it was too cold for a walk, even at Sunset Beach, and I was grumpy.



Apparently, it was not too cold for the three intrepid cyclists to head to Charleston and onto Seven Devil’s Road. The 11-mile long road, with 1,200 of climbing and no shoulder was not a relaxing way to start the morning. Plus the only views were of trees and fog.



Later, after the fog burned off, the wind came up and blew in the cyclists’ faces the rest of the day! The supposed tailwind has been very illusive so far this trip.



Bandon: This small town is the cranberry capital of Oregon – and we were there during their annual cranberry festival. I got lots of

compliments and ear rubs from the people at the festival, and everyone else sampled fudge and nut

brittle! (Jeanne and I found the festival and fudge independently from the cyclists!)



Humbug Mountain: The cyclists hit Humbug Mountain late in the day and were concerned that it would be a horrid climb. Instead, it was a mellow ride along a stream and through a small valley back to the sea!



Gold Beach: Tonight we are in a condo at Jot’s Resort on the Rogue River. Jeanne loves the view of the river, but the cyclists keep eyeing the bridge and wondering how wide the shoulder will be. I doubt they will have nightmares, though.



Today’s Stats: 87 miles and 4,700 feet of climbing between Coos Bay, Oregon and Gold Beach, Oregon.

Day 17 – Chico’s Log: Crossing the Oregon Border to Klamath, California

Calves: I have given Kevin the award for “most shapely calves” – and Bob the award for “calves most frequently hidden by tights” – but Dale now has been awarded “bionic calves” as he has discovered KT Tape as therapy while his hamstring and calf heal! Dale even changed his bicycle seat (his “saddle”) this morning, hoping it would ease the pain elsewhere!



Sunshine: I love the fog, but the cyclists were happy to see blue sky this morning! Gold Beach’s Rogue River Bridge looks much less scary with a bit of sunshine.



Samuel H. Boardman State Park: Some of the best views along the entire coast are in the State Park just north of Brookings, but I got tired of getting in and out of the van as we drove along. This is the part where I was jealous of those cyclists!



Crescent City: California also has lots of famous lighthouses, including one in Crescent City’s Battery Point Park (almost hidden behind Bob’s right shoulder).



Paul Bunyan and the Iron Men Cyclists: THE place to stay (in fact the ONLY place to stay) in Klamath is the Motel Trees – run by the same folks who give us “Trees of Mystery.” But Paul Bunyan and his blue ox Babe pale in comparison to these legendary cyclists, right?



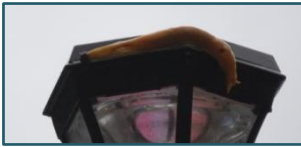
Today’s Stats: 75 miles and 4,500 feet of climbing between Gold Beach, Oregon and Klamath, California.

Day 18 – Chico's Log: Through California's Redwood National Park to Fortuna, California

Size: Maybe the cyclists are legendary and can stand up to Paul Bunyan's Blue Ox, but when I got up close to that beast, I felt very inferior. That's me at the VERY bottom of the photo.



Banana Slugs: It was so wet this morning that the banana slugs came out to enjoy the rainy

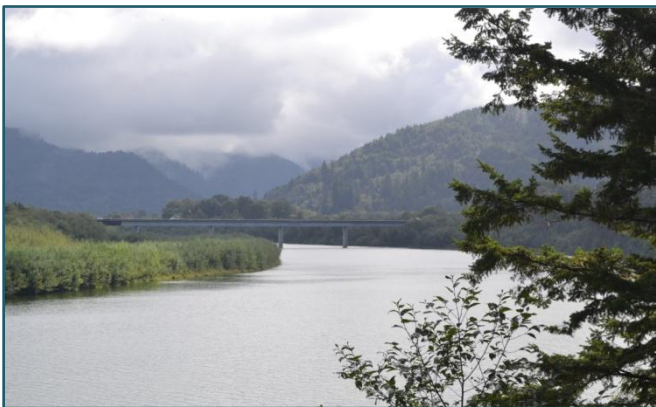


mist. One even crawled up the light post in front of our room to get a view of the rain! See him there on top of the right lamppost? We

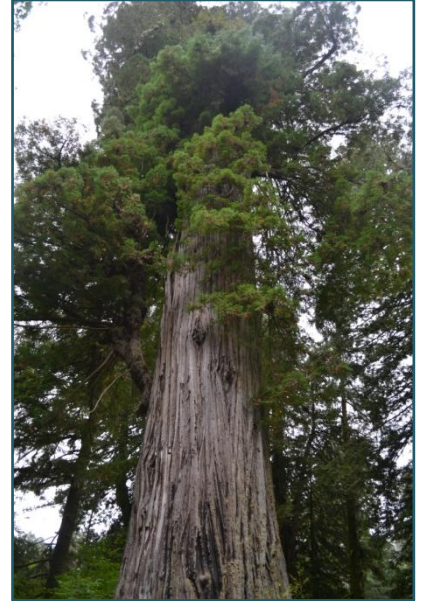
must be in the Redwood Empire. My buddy Aki-Dog tried to eat one and the slime on its back numbed his mouth.



Klamath River: The cyclists crossed the Klamath River on a short bridge. Jeanne and I explored the mouth of the river and watched the Klamath Indians net fishing for salmon.



No Dogs Allowed: I have been allowed almost anywhere in BC, Washington, and Oregon – but now that we are in California, I suddenly am banned from all state and national park trails. All I have been able to do is look out the window. Jeanne left me in the car once to go on a really short walk to see The Big Tree – a walk so short the cyclists even did it in their cleated shoes.



Back to the Sea:

But then we left the redwoods and got into the sunshine at Patrick's Point State Park and at the overlook of Trinidad Memorial lighthouse. When the sun comes out, the cyclists get a tail wind, so they were REALLY happy to be back in the sun. But apparently we are driving through more redwoods tomorrow - where I am banned to stay in the car and the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow.



Today's Road News: Much of the route today was on Hwy. 101. It has rumble strips marking the edge of the shoulder which were difficult to see – and dangerous if you accidentally rode on one. Still, they rode 88 miles and did 4,000 feet of climbing between Klamath and Fortuna, California

Day 19 – Chico’s Log: California’s Avenue of the Giants to the Ocean at Fort Bragg

Ferndale and the Lost Coast: Jeanne grew up spending a lot of time visiting relatives in Ferndale, the town where her father was born, so she took me on a VERY bumpy road through Ferndale to Cape Mendocino, Petrolia and a remote beach at the north end of the King Range National Conservation Area on the Lost Coast. The cyclists would have been miserable on this pot-holed rode, and I had a terrible time trying to sleep. But I enjoyed romping on the dunes at the beach.



Avenue of the Giants: I’m not allowed to walk on the trails in the state park, so I just got to smell the trees. Jeanne and the cyclists explored the short Founders Grove trail before continuing down the road.



Up and Over the Coast Range on Highway 1: The pass between Leggett and the Ocean at the north end of Highway 1 is the highest we have been on in miles. Bob sprinted up the climb to continue winning points as the best climber – and to keep his “polka dot” climbing jersey for this Tour de Pacific Côte.



Coastal Vistas to Fort Bragg: Even though we have spent over two weeks on the coast, it felt good to get back to it after visiting Humboldt Redwoods.



Today’s Stats: 117 miles and 8,000 feet of climbing between Fortuna and Fort Bragg, California. (Dale’s calves and hamstrings have recovered!)

Day 20 – Chico’s Log: Mendocino Coast Adventures

Mendocino: It is interesting to see and smell the different parts of the coastline. Once we came back to the coast after the redwoods yesterday, there were fewer trees on the coast and more grass. The lack of trees makes the coastline easier to see! I met the cyclists early this morning on the bluffs in Mendocino so they could get their real shoes out of the van and walk along the bluffs. Amazingly, there wasn’t any fog!



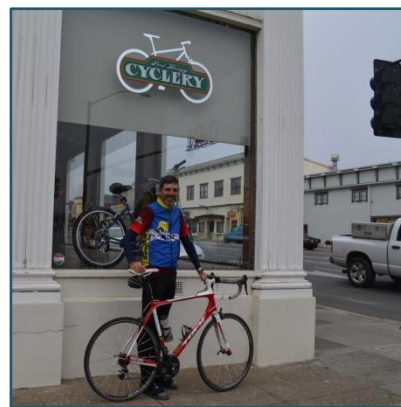
But then they had to go and leave us, and I howled I missed them so much.



Winners and Losers: Dale has had 6½ flat tires. The ½ flat was one that didn’t leak but needed a “boot” of protective rubber to keep it from blowing out. Kevin has had 4½ because he had the same problem. Bob is, a distant third in the Flat Tire Contest, for he has had none.

That’s why Bob declared a NEW contest today – one for broken derailleur cables. The end of his frayed cable got stuck inside the shifting mechanism – so when

Jeanne and I passed the cyclists 30 miles south of Ft. Bragg, we picked him up and took him BACK to Ft. Bragg – about a mile from where we spent the night – to get it fixed. Bob, Jeanne and I got to go down to the Noyo River Harbor in Fort Bragg and play at the beach.



We spent three hours waiting for a nice man named Mark at Fort Bragg Cyclery to fix it. Somehow, Dale and Kevin have said they don’t want to participate in this newest contest. I don’t understand why.



Who Rode What: Kevin and Dale rode 67 miles and climbed 5,000 feet. Bob rode half that, but he got to see more of Ft. Bragg!

Day 21 – Chico’s Log: Sonoma and Marin Coast Adventures

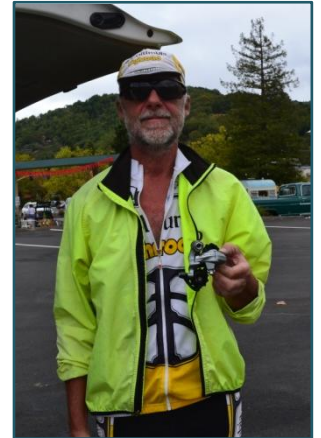
Sonoma Beaches State Park: Jeanne and I, in our minivan that has been dubbed the “Mother Ship” leap-frogged ahead of the cyclists. That way, we could go on a couple of walks this morning that were “dog legal” in Sonoma Beaches State Park – the Vista Trail and the paved loop at Duncan’s Landing. I liked watching the clouds play peek-a-boo with the sunshine. Bob’s derailleur was deemed better than ever, and the guys were off to a great start down the coast and across the Russian River.



Tomales Bay State Park: We stopped again at lots of different viewpoints of Tomales Bay. Usually we are too busy heading to Point Reyes or somewhere else to spend much time here, but today we decided to check out the dog-friendly trail at Millerton Point. Even though this trail is in Tomales Bay State Park, dogs are allowed if we are on leashes – and I had a really fun loop walk. The trail is much expanded from what it used to be. Tomales Bay is actually a really pretty area and reminds me of some of the long, skinny bays in British Columbia – but this one was made because of the erosion along the rocks ground up by the San Andreas fault, not a glacier.



Derailleur Crazy: Kevin’s bike fell over at their stop in Point Reyes Station, and when Kevin test-drove it to see if the derailleur still worked, the beastly piece caught on one of the spokes of his wheel and broke off! Thus, Jeanne and I in the Mother Ship were called back from Fairfax to Point Reyes Station to retrieve Kevin and his bike and take them to Fairfax Cyclery (which didn’t have one part). For any of you bicycle novices, a derailleur is not a de-rail-er – but this gizmo that moves the chain from one gear to another so that these iron men cyclists can keep pedaling when they go up steep hills – and down steep hills. I have just two gears – very slow when I am heading away from the van on a walk with Jeanne – and very fast as soon as we turn around to go back to the van. These fancy bicycles have 18 or 20 gears! Sounds crazy to me.



Marin Brewing Company: All of us ended up in Larkspur at the Marin Brewing Company. Bob and Dale rode 107 miles and climbed 8,000 feet, but Kevin was sagged the last 27 miles. After dinner, we drove to the East Bay to spend a well-deserved night that wasn’t in a hotel! Kevin is going to his “normal” bike shop tomorrow morning to get a part to attach the derailleur to his bike frame and plans to meet us later in the day. Bob, Dale, Jeanne and I are headed back to Larkspur early tomorrow to ride south again toward Mexico!



Day 22 – Chico’s Log: Wind, Showers, Rain, and Downpours

I’m in the dog house: Or at least that’s what they are saying. Apparently, Californians not only don’t allow pets in state and national parks – but also in most of the motels. This has been a particular problem for hotels as we pass through the heart of the Bay Area. Thus, we spent last night in our own homes – and made reservations earlier than usual for Santa Cruz for tonight. But the weather reporters are also in the dog house with me, because the report yesterday said a 20-30% chance of showers (not rain) today.



Bob, Dale, Jeanne and I arrived back at the Marin Brewing Company parking lot at 8 a.m. this morning to somewhat cloudy skies. (Kevin would join us later because he was getting his bike repaired.) Dale took his bike off the top of the van and he had yet ANOTHER flat tire so by the time the two cyclists left the parking lot, there was a fine mist falling.



When Jeanne and I arrived at the overlooks on the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge, the wind was howling and – just as she returned to the car – the mist

turned to a light rain – and by the time we crossed the bridge, the light rain had turned to REAL rain.

Jeanne and I met up with Lena (Dale and Jeanne’s daughter) on the south end of the bridge, so we were a proper greeting committee. Lena held up a sign she had made congratulating them.



Bob and Dale reported that they had felt like salmon swimming upstream as they met most of the 3,000 riders in the **MS Waves-to-Wine** fundraiser crossing the bridge heading north! (Dale is fundraising for them again this year – but riding backwards!)

While the wind and rain on the bridge were torrential, they had chocolate croissants and hot drinks with us and the rain almost quit. So they decided to ride on.



But as they rode along the Great Highway on the ocean side of San Francisco, the wind and rain increased significantly. Their tires were spewing sand and water all over them, particularly where a dune had completely encroached on and buried the bike lane. They were averaging 11 miles an hour on the flat due to the howling wind – when they had been averaging 15 miles an hour on the trip, including all the climbing.

Next they headed to visit Bob's daughter Lisa, who is living in a house near Lake Merced in southwestern San Francisco, hoping to warm up.

Gi-Gi (their name for the crazy woman who gives them directions on Bob's **G**armin-**G**PS) is also in the dog house, for she took them on a round-about tour of southwestern San Francisco (including directing them into the Daly City BART Station garage!) to get to their destination. At this point, both Bob and Dale were shivering and were rescued by Lisa's hot chocolate – just as the skies opened up and sheets of water fell from the heavens. They had ridden "only" 29 miles and 1,000 feet of climbing from Larkspur!

Shortly after, Jeanne and I in the white minivan Mother Ship arrived, for we had been waiting for them on the outskirts of Pacifica, amazed that they had continued to ride after we saw them at the south end of the Golden Gate Bridge. They loaded their bikes on the van and we drove to Half Moon Bay for lunch with Lena at Miramar Beach Restaurant with a window view of the rain and discussed how we would gladly take them back here AFTER we hit the Mexican border to complete the 60-mile stretch from Daly City BART to Santa Cruz. Thus, all of us piled in the van and drove to Santa Cruz. (Any rumors of the stench of "wet dog" in a crowded van should be discounted.)

Kevin, and another rider Dave, met us in Santa Cruz. Dave's wife had driven them – and their bikes – from Eden Cyclery where Kevin's derailleur had been fixed, to our hotel. Kevin and Dave were incredulous about how Dale and Bob had even TRIED to ride in today's weather! But as we look at the view from the Santa Cruz wharf, it is hard to believe it rained at all today!



So far, we have been encouraged and helped by four of the six daughters of these iron men riders.



Kevin's daughter Courtney picked him up (with his broken bike) and took him home from Marin.

Bob's daughter Cindy was there to take him home to Antioch from our house last night (with Bob's wife Jane).



Dale's daughter Lena had her sign at the bridge – and again in Half Moon Bay.

Bob's daughter Lisa served the needed hot chocolate today.



Day 23 – Chico's Log: Along Monterey Bay

And NOW there are four of them! Dave Perez has officially joined Kevin McTighe, Bob Liles, and Dale Perkins for the next few days – and maybe all the way to Mexico! I have more sheep in my flock!



Lighthouse Beach State Park: Given yesterday's weather, it is hard to believe that not only is it still NOT raining in Santa Cruz – but it is largely sunny.

Moss Landing: The sun was even shining in Moss Landing so we could see the thousands of birds, the dozens of sea lions and otters, and the glorious harbor.



Sand Dunes: We're not sure if it was the raging storm yesterday – or just lack of maintenance, but the cyclists had tons of SAND on the path into Monterey!



Pacific Grove: Jeanne and I love Pacific Grove, so we spent the afternoon here. The cyclists enjoyed the area, as well.

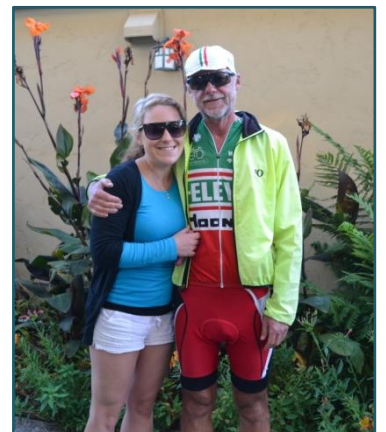


Asilomar Beach State Park: Asilomar is one of my favorite beaches on the Monterey Peninsula and Jeanne and I romped in the sand and strolled on the boardwalk next to Spanish Bay – while the cyclists headed to the other entrance to Spanish Bay off 17-Mile Drive (which is FREE for bicyclists) and to Point Lobos.



Who Rode What:

Bob, Dale and Dave rode 76 miles and climbed 3,500 feet. Kevin abandoned the group in Marina to visit his OTHER daughter, Kaitlin, missing a few miles!



Day 24 – Chico’s Log: A Perfect Day on the Big Sur Coast

Perfect Conditions: The sun was shining and there was no fog!



Bixby Creek Bridge: Highway One is truly perched on the edge of nothing – and nowhere is that more obvious than when it crosses Bixby Creek.



Pfeiffer Beach: My favorite beach on the entire Pacific Coast is Pfeiffer Beach – and dogs are allowed!



Favorites: One of Jeanne’s favorite places to just sit and enjoy not having to drive for a while is on the deck of the Nepenthe café. Meanwhile, Dale and the cyclists biked on the HIKING (not BIKING) trail to McWay Falls, one of just two waterfalls into California’s Pacific Ocean.



Pacific Valley: The Big Sur coast drops to near the sea at Pacific Valley. The view back to Cone Peak, the second highest point in the Santa Lucia Mountains is great. It is hard to believe that Cone Peak, at 5,155 feet, is only three from the sea!



Elephant Seals: I wanted to go play with the elephant seals, but I’m not allowed to. Instead, Jeanne and the cyclists left me in the van while they watched them fling sand to keep cool.



Today’s Stats: 94 miles with 7,300 feet of climbing!!

Day 25 – Chico’s Log: San Luis Obispo’s Varied Terrain



Bugs and Bees: In retrospect, the guys admitted to me that there were SMALL problems with the Monterey Coast yesterday – bees and gnats. The gnats bit you when you weren’t riding 30 miles an hour, particularly near

Lucia, and a bee managed to sting Dale when he WAS riding 30 miles an hour down one of the last hills of the day. The good news is that the bee’s timing was a bit off, so the sting was relatively mind.

Detour to Vegas? The guys rode less than a mile this morning in San Simeon and suddenly were in Las Vegas with the King!!



Morro Bay: We found the cyclists this morning in Morro Bay – not checking out the harbor or that big Morro Rock – but at a BAKERY. Bob and Dale have bonded on this trip eating sticky buns. Dale even asked for MORE sticky on his sticky bun this morning. One advantage of riding so many miles is that these guys are burning huge numbers of calories. They stop every couple of hours to refuel.



Chico’s TOP 6 Reasons He Knows He Has Arrived in Southern California:

#6 – The cyclists are dropping off the back of the pace line less frequently to take photos of the rocky coast.

#5 – When Highway 1 departs from 101 in Pismo Beach it is suddenly signed as “Pacific Coast Highway” – or even “The PCH.”

#4 – Piers are for fishing from or viewing surfers, not for mooring fishing boats.

#3 – I saw young ladies on Pismo Beach playing beach volleyball. (The cyclists were too busy looking at the road to see this, so Jeanne took photos of the GUYS playing beach volleyball just to torment them.)



#2 – There are more Mexican restaurants than places selling oysters.

#1 – Bob actually took off his arm warmers for part of the day and didn’t wear his ever-present tights at all!

Inland to Lompoc: We traveled inland past farmland (around Point Conception) to get to Lompoc for the night – having ridden 101 miles and climbed 4,100 feet.

Day 26 – Chico's Log: Santa Barbara and Ventura Coastlines

Gaviota Pass and State Park: Leaving Lompoc, the bike route runs through more agricultural and grazing land.



Next, we crossed over the Coast Range at Gaviota Pass. This pass is “exciting” because Highway 1 joins 101 with LOTS of trucks and traffic. Luckily, the shoulder is reasonable.



Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara is a beautiful area backed by the Coast Range featuring the Mission, Stearns Wharf, and red-tiled roofs.



I was a huge hit on Stearns Wharf, with several groups of tourists asking permission to take my picture. One lady from Singapore even gave me a great ear and neck massage! (She told me that she misses her dog a lot.)



Wind and Pace Lines: Cyclists ride together like geese to minimize the wind resistance, particularly in flatter areas. According to the folks at the San Francisco Exploratorium (bless their hearts), this saves up to 15-40% of the energy for trailing riders – and even saves a few percent of the energy for the lead rider “pulling” the group. As the hills have diminished after Big Sur, the wind and aerodynamics have taken on more importance.

The winds have generally been favorable the last three days. Two days ago, the cyclists flew into San Simeon riding together at 24 miles an hour with a nice tail wind. Yesterday, Dale got a bit over-exuberant with a nice tail wind and ramped the pace up to 32 miles an hour, which was too fast to keep the group together. Today, while the winds were generally favorable, there was a horrendous cross-wind for a while in the morning.

Ventura Coast: South of Santa Barbara, Highway 1/101 follows the shore. On what was going to be a beautiful ride, there was just one problem – more road construction! But the iron men still managed to complete 91 miles and climb 3,300 feet – in plenty of time to meet Bob's third daughter, Suzy – thus completing my mission of meeting all six of the three Canada-to-Mexico cyclists' daughters!



Day 27 – Chico’s Log: Through the Heart of L.A. – Ventura to Long Beach

Ventura and Oxnard: The stoplights really slowed the cyclists down, but the problem was exacerbated by the kids getting dropped off at school and all the buses!



The Santa Monica Mountains and Malibu: Malibu goes on for 27 miles at the base of the Santa Monica Mountains. For much of this distance, the “city” is only one street wide along The PCH.



Jeanne spent a long time checking out the scene at Surfrider Beach, Malibu Lagoon and Malibu Pier.



Santa Monica to Venice Beach: The bike path goes through the heart of this area with a CRAZY street scene, including skate boarders, vendors, homeless, and beach bums, here, at the “end” of Route 66!



And then there were FIVE: Bob’s high school and college friend and cycling mentor, Ray Gross, joined the group for several miles. It was fun for



everyone to finally meet the source of many of Bob’s cycling tales, including the little-known fact that Bob used to live precisely a gross (144) miles from Mexico.

Three to Long Beach: By the end of the day in Long Beach, there were only three cyclists, for Dave had left to join his friend in Huntington Beach – and Ray Gross went back home. The boats in the marina are impressive, and the pizza was great!



Today’s Stats: In the end, the cyclists rode 94 miles and climbed 2,600 feet – a record “low” of climbing. Some have asked where the hills are. But if you are riding 100 miles, all you need is 26 feet each mile of up and down and it adds up to 2,600 feet!

Day 28 – Chico’s Log: Long Beach to Cardiff-by-the-Sea (Encinitas)

Long Beach: Before leaving Long Beach, Bob and Kevin lined up at the start line for the famous Grand Prix race!



I had a fun time going for a walk on the bluff above Long Beach’s beach – an area the cyclists raced by!



Laguna Beach Volleyball: They stopped, however, to check out the beach volleyball players.



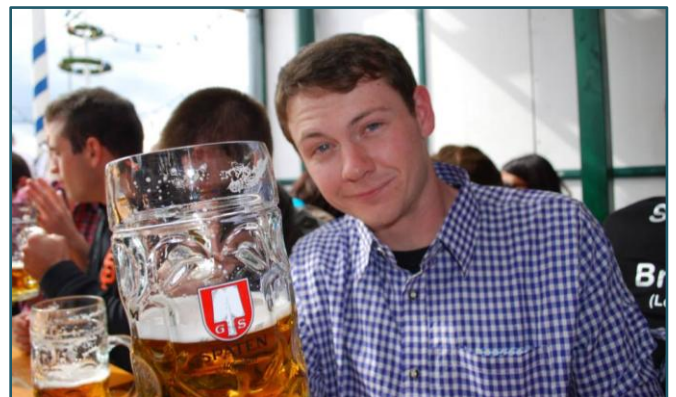
Camp Pendleton and its Signs: I had great views of the sea from I-5 in Pendleton, while the cyclists got to ride through the Marine Base!



In the Pacific: Dale announced that he had been riding with views of the Pacific Ocean for weeks – and announced that he HAD to swim in it!



The “Last” Kid: For anyone keeping track, the three guys have six daughters – and ONE son – Kevin Perkins. Kevin is studying abroad for a year in Germany. However, he has sent his greetings to the cyclists: “Prost!” (“Cheers!”) from Oktoberfest last weekend.



Today’s Stats: The guys rode 84 miles and climbed 2,900 feet to Encinitas in San Diego County!

Day 29 – Chico’s Log: Encinitas to the Mexican Border – and Back to Santa Clarita to REST

Pavement: The cyclists spent the day riding in San Diego County – and this county gets the “prize” for the WORST pavement on the entire route. Lane County in Oregon may have had a patchwork of paving – but in this area there were some places here that were so full of pot holes that the riders were afraid they would lose all the fillings in their teeth! And the part with the worst paving in the entire county was in La Jolla!

Border Field State Park: Jeanne and I headed off early to find a spot at the Mexican border that would be worthy to end a 4-week cycling saga. Border Field State Park, and adjacent Tijuana National Wildlife Refuge, was our choice. It was particularly special because the riders arrived on a Saturday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the U.S. Border Patrol opens the fence so you can actually be face-to-face with our Tijuana counterparts.



Fittingly, the view also included the Pacific Ocean since this has been a Bicycle Tour of the Pacific Coast Route between Canada and Mexico. The guys arrived at about 12:15 p.m., and we stayed to take pictures and celebrate until about 1 p.m. The mesa that the monument is on has views of the adjacent Tijuana bull fighting ring, as well as north to Imperial Beach.



Imperial Beach: We all piled in the minivan and headed to Imperial Beach so Dale and Kevin could swim in the ocean – and we could have some lunch.



Meeting Bob Liles’ Dad Clarence: We celebrated again with Bob’s 95-year-old dad and Bob’s daughter Cindy at a Swiss-German restaurant in Los Angeles – and ate something other than fish and shellfish!



The FINAL Day: Today the cyclists rode 50 miles and climbed 1,700 feet before arriving at the border.

Day 30 – Chico’s Log: The Re-Cap on the Drive Back to the Bay Area

Team Awards: Last night, Dale and I decided on the following awards, formally presented at last night’s dinner:

- Best team support while Dale’s legs sorted themselves out: Kevin and Bob
- Best calves: Kevin (although I think my furry ones should have won)
- Best calves in the “chicken leg” division: Dale and Bob – tied
- Best biker shorts tan – Bob (far right below)



- Most beer consumed: Kevin (one-night award went to Dave in Lompoc)
- Most poops in scenic places: Me (Chico)
- Most poop pickups: Jeanne
- Best navigation: Bob and Gigi
- Worst navigation: Bob and Gigi
- Most daughters visited: Bob
- Best daughter: 6-way tie
- Best detective work seeking out dog-friendly, cool things to do: Jeanne
- Best planning and reservation-making in cool dog-friendly places to stay: Jeanne
- Best SAG support and putting up with smelly, tired cyclists: Jeanne and Me (Chico)
- Most flats: Dale
- Fewest mechanical breakdowns (not counting body parts): Dale (even though he had the oldest bike)
- Most time “pulling” the pace line (aka leading), on days he was there: Dave

- Fastest “pull” segment (up to 32 mph), even though it splintered the group and was disqualified as a legitimate pull: Dale
- Best overall trip “Mum”: Jeanne
- King of the Mountains (best climber): Bob
- Most sweets consumed (including apple fritters, sticky buns, DQ blizzards, and Hostess fruit pies): Bob and Dale --tied
- Biggest variety of junk food: Bob
- Cutest and most photographed and admired by strangers (not much competition here!): Me (Chico)



- Best dressed rider in matching ensembles (again, very little competition, except when Dave was present): Kevin
- Wettest cyclists (in San Francisco): Bob and Dale
- Smartest cyclists: Kevin and Dave, for NOT riding from Larkspur to Daly City
- Best writer: Me (Chico)



Today in the van, we also awarded several other distinguished awards.

Driving Awards:

- Most courteous drivers: San Juan Islands, WA
- Least courteous drivers: San Diego County, CA
- Most clueless driver: A guy driving an RV towing a boat who had no idea how long he was in Oregon
- Most obnoxious driver: A motorcyclist who made his motorcycle backfire right beside them
- Highest percentage of obnoxious drivers: Diesel pickups who roll by you and then stomp on it to give you a big cloud of diesel fumes in the face

Pavement Awards (on the shoulders where the cyclists were riding, not necessarily the main roadway):

- Worst pavement: San Diego County, California – particularly in La Jolla
- Most pavement damaged by road construction: Hwy 101 in Eureka, California
- Runner up for worst pavement: Lane County, Oregon
- Best pavement: Highway One near Ft. Bragg

Sketchiest Routes:

- Having to cross two lanes of freeway traffic to get on Highway 101 at the bottom of Gaviota Pass just north of Santa Barbara
- Uphill tunnels on Highway 101 in Washington

Although the Iron Men are definitely Iron Men, some of the credit goes to their Carbon-Fiber Bicycles and Tires. The Specs:

- Dale: 2001 Silver, Red, White and Blue (with US Postal Service Logos) Trek 5700 – standard Ultegra 9-speed drive train – 53-39 chain rings – 27-12 cassette (predating compact gearing) – but most importantly, using an OLD beat up but comfortable saddle from Gold Beach south – AND comfortable mountain-bike shoes. He had Continental Grand Prix 4000 tires – pumped to 100-105 and had 8½ flats.
- Kevin: 2013 Black, White and Blue Giant Defy – standard Ultegra 10-speed compact gearing –

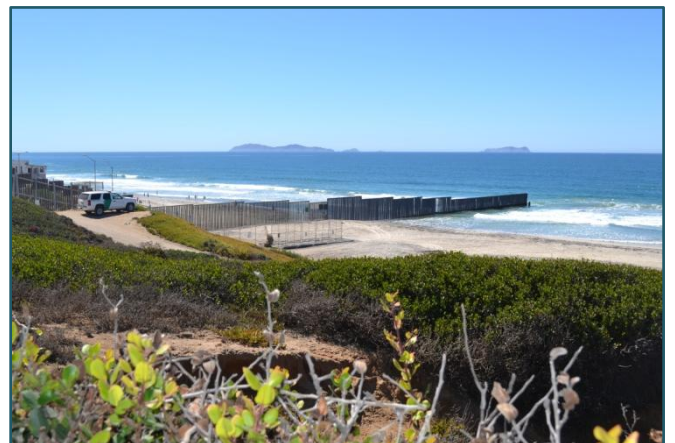
and a new derailleur after Marin County! He had Michelin ProRace 3 tires – pumped to 105-115 – and had 5½ flats.

- Bob: 2012 Red and White Trek Madone 5.2 – standard Ultegra 10-speed compact gearing – and a new rear derailleur cable after Ft. Bragg. He had Continental Gator Skin tires – pumped up to 100 – and had 1 flat!



Overall Ride Specs from Vancouver, north to Powell River, and then south to the Mexican Border Fence (not including three mini rides on the drive to Canada):

- Before the ride, people would ask the cyclists how far they expected to ride. They estimated “about 2,000” and were close.
- Actual Miles in 26 days: 2,049 – missing about 60 miles due to rain from Daly City BART to Santa Cruz (both Bob and Kevin are missing a few more due to mechanical problems)
- Actual Climbing: 110,450 feet (again, these are for Dale – Bob and Kevin are missing a few feet)
- Jeanne and I drove or rode 4,540 miles in our white minivan.



Day 31 – Chico’s Log: The Missing Link for E-L-I

Up and Away: I couldn’t believe it. I finally got to sleep in my own bed last night, but when I rolled over and started to wake up, I saw that Dale had one of those same wild flashy bicycle jerseys on and suitcases were getting packed and... and... I couldn’t believe it... I was back in the van and we were off AGAIN!

E-L-I: Dale was mumbling about **E-L-I**. Finally, Jeanne had to explain to me that he wanted to ride **Every Last Inch** (from border-to-border). We had picked Dale and Bob up at Bob’s daughter’s house near Lake Merced in San Francisco and dropped them off at Santa Cruz the day it rained, so technically Dale had not ridden from Canada to Mexico. Bob and Kevin passed on this opportunity, noting that they had both previously ridden all of the sections they missed on this trip. Dale had also previously ridden from San Francisco to Santa Cruz, but he announced, “That doesn’t count.”

Weather: Yet as we drove across the new Bay Bridge in the misty rain, we all wondered if this was a doomed mission.



But we dropped Dale off and sent him on his way while we drove past Pacifica en route to Half Moon Bay.



We met Dale and Jeanne’s daughter Lena in Half Moon Bay. The sun even came out right after our picnic lunch, and we headed on a hike. We were surprised to catch Dale at Waddell Bluffs on our way to Santa Cruz.

The End of the Road: We met Dale across from the motel where we had stayed in Santa Cruz after he had ridden 74 miles and climbed 3,600 feet – and declared that E-L-I had been completed!



But I still didn’t get to sleep at home, for we went to Lena’s house and spent the night with my buddy Aki-Dog! Tomorrow Jeanne and Dale have promised that we are driving home and this odyssey will be over. I will kind of miss our daily adventure, but I need to catch up on my sleep. **I’m exhausted just thinking about Dale riding 2,123 miles AND climbing a total of 114,050 feet!** The final total for Jeanne and me riding or driving in the van was 4,804 miles.

Reflections – Chico’s Log: A Day in the Life of the “SAG Wagon” Crew

The SAG Wagon: Cyclists have lots of cycling terms, including one that applies to us – the crew in the “SAG Wagon.” SAG is an acronym for “Support and Gear” – and that’s what we carried in our Toyota minivan.

Our Schedule: The alarm was set to go off for us at 6:15 a.m. every day – allowing us to pack up, have a quick breakfast, and read and send out emails. If my daily log email had not been sent out the day before, we would typically get up to proof and finalize it prior to – or during – breakfast.

Then we were on our own until about 3 or 4 p.m., when we needed to be at the hotel so that the cyclists would have clean clothes to change into after they showered. (Yes, riding 75 to 115 miles does make you sweaty.)

My quietest part of the day was from when we arrived at the hotel until dinner. This is when the three cyclists often had some beer and down-time while Jeanne and I discussed the day’s events so that I could figure out what to write about.

Then we went out to dinner. Sometimes I got to go along if there was outside seating, sometimes I stayed in the hotel room, but mostly I rode along in the back of the van and took a nap while the humans ate dinner. I ate my dinner after we got back.

At dinner we decided how long the cyclists wanted to ride based on where we might find a hotel that night. Once the destination town was determined, Jeanne made hotel reservations. This was important because most hotels don’t allow dogs (a backward policy, if you ask me). For anyone with dog allergies, however, you should know that hotels specify “pet friendly” rooms so that we dogs are only staying in certain hotel rooms. They also charge an extra “pet fee” to allow the staff to

do extra cleaning of the rooms we stay in.

Our Day: We typically drove the same roads that the cyclists were riding – but not at the same

speed. We were the hares – and they were the tortoises. We would sprint ahead – sneak off and have a walk in a park – and then head back to the road – anywhere from one-to-four times a day. We also stopped and took pictures. This routine enabled us to visit lots of places that the cyclists did not see – and thus did not make it into this log, like lighthouses, mouths of rivers and missions. For example, on Day 31 we had a fun time with Lena and the banana slugs in the redwoods of San Mateo County coastline’s Butano State Park.



Next Time? We told Dale we would change the rules if he wants us to SAG another multi-day ride to include some two-night stays to give us as SAGgers a break. We would have loved to spend another day in the San Juan Islands, Washington – or in Astoria, Washington – or in Gold Beach, Oregon – or in Santa Barbara, California – or any of a number of other locations. We also would prefer to be gone for a shorter period. The bottom line? We would decline to SAG a 50-day 3,700-mile cross-country trip, but we *might* SAG a cross-country trip if we could split it up into three parts.

