

The Ultimate Coast to Coast to Coast

Part 2

Insanity



7,378 Miles (Prudhoe Bay, Alaska to Key West, Florida)

After obtaining the receipt that ended my first UCC and started my second, I rode back to Deadhorse Camp. I used the shower facilities down the hall from my room. I was chilled to the bone! The hot shower felt great! It didn't take long to get to sleep after that!

June 9 – I was up early! It was 6:00 am. I decided to go for a little ride back to the General Store.

It was cold, windy and foggy as I rode around. The wind would cut right through you! The fog was filled with moisture that froze to my windshield. Just like the day before, the entire area was wet! Mud puddles covered the dirt roads. Even

though moisture would freeze to my windshield, the dirt/gravel roads would absorb it, so they weren't slick. It was just nasty weather conditions!



29 Degrees/21 Wind Chill

Back at Deadhorse Camp, I ate breakfast. It was an all-you-could-eat buffet with limited items just

like dinner the night before. But, I have to say the food was great!

At 7:45 am, I was checked-in for the tour. There were 17 of us. Several couples and families. I think I was the only motorcyclist in the group.



Arctic Tour Bus

The young man that changed my reservation was our tour guide. He was very knowledgeable about the area and the local oil business.

It was only 7 miles out to the Arctic Ocean. Along the way, he would point out different species of birds and answer any questions we had.

Interesting Facts:

- The permafrost is frozen down 2,000 feet. Only the top 12-18 inches thaw during the summer giving the area a marshy look.
- Written in the oil company leases is a clause that when the company stops the lease, they must return the land to the original state, all buildings, roads, etc. removed like it was untouched.

- Some oil companies are inactive in the area but keep their lease due to cost of returning it back to nature.
- The area receives the same rainfall as Phoenix (about 6 inches), but the ocean keeps the area humid and moist. It's foggy and overcast most of the time.

When we arrived at the ocean, it was still frozen! The tour guide said you could literally walk on the frozen ocean to the North Pole 1,200 miles away. He said the coast should thaw by mid-July.

The polar bears had left the area as they follow the seals north with the cold weather. They'll return in winter.

The tour guide gave everyone a towel to dry off with should anyone decide to remove their shoes and wade in the ocean water. There were a couple of places where the ice was broke open for access to the water. Several people removed their shoes, rolled up their pant legs and waded in!

It was cold and the wind still blowing! It had not warmed up any since I was out earlier. If anything, it was much colder by the frozen ocean.

I did step into the water with my boots to gather my water/sand sample! This is what I came for! I never imagined that I would ever visit the Arctic Ocean! Amazing!



Arctic Ocean Water/Sand

The guide led us from one area to another. The second spot had standing water on top of the ice. The tour guide removed his outer layer of clothes down to his bathing suit, walked out and rolled in the water! No one else was brave enough to join him!



Arctic Roll

He said he does it every day on the tour! He did make some good tips! I was freezing in my dry riding gear! Did I say it was cold!!!

The tour was over by 10:00 am. Back at the hotel, I dug out all my warm electric riding gear, shirt, pants, insoles, and gloves! I put it all on!

On the bike, I had a separate controller for each item! I cranked them all up! Even though I only

wore the pants and insoles this one time on the trip, they were worth it! The weather was heavy overcast, extremely windy, and still below freezing when I pulled out of Deadhorse Camp headed south! It was 11:00 am.

There was pavement for 65 miles as I started down the Dalton Highway. I stayed alert to watch for gravel patches. This was still very fresh in my mind from the day before!

Once I hit dirt road, it was back to dodging rough spots. The overcast sky did subside about the same time the pavement ended. Once the sun came out, the temperature slowly warmed up.

I was thrilled when a large herd of about 30 musk oxen crossed the road! A couple of cars were stopped on the road as I pulled up. One family got out of their car to collect the fur that clung to the branches of the brush alongside the road. As the musk ox walked through the brush, it combed their hide and removed some of their remaining winter coat.

The father of the family walked over to me and handed me a small sample of the musk oxen fur. He had recognized me from the Arctic tour. He said, you might enjoy taking some of this back to Mississippi. The native Alaskans collect this and make warm winter wool clothing out of it. I thanked him for thinking of me! Cool!



Herd of Musk Ox

What else was cool was the baby within the herd. He was a little guy about the size of a large dog. It had all the same features of the adults without the horns. Cute! It stayed right beside momma as they moved along!

At one of the construction stops, I waited 45 minutes for the pilot truck. It was 100 miles from Deadhorse or Coldfoot. I asked the flagman, if he had to commute out here daily. He said no. They had temporary housing here and he pointed to a small group of buildings about a half mile off the road.

While I was waiting, I received a phone call from a friend. Their temporary housing base must have provided a cellphone tower.



Waiting on Pilot Truck

I continued on toward the Brooks Range and Atigun Pass. As I was riding through, fresh dirt had been leveled out on the road with a tall berm on the left shoulder. The dirt was 3 to 6 inches deep or deeper in spots. The dirt slowed me down and had me drifting over to the left. The more I resisted, the more I drifted! I plowed right into the tall berm of soft dirt and fell over! Point! Dalton Highway! (Mark zero, Dalton Highway 1 point)

I jumped off the bike and tried to lift it. No, too heavy! So, I immediately started to remove the auxiliary gas tank. At the same time, a German rider pulled up on his BMW. He parked his bike and walked over to help. A big guy about my size. So, I stopped removing anything and we pulled the bike out of the dirt pile backward. I couldn't thank that gentleman enough! But, no time to spare! There was a semi-truck headed our way! We jumped on our bikes and continued on! No harm, no foul to my bike! Not even a scratch from the soft dirt.

The only thing that I could figure out is that when I'm trying not to drift to the left, I must be tensing my left leg (like braking) and that shifts the bike that direction. Like I said, the gravel/dirt road riding is not intuitive to me.

The temperatures continued to rise as I rode along. It was 70 degrees when I pulled into Coldfoot. I was ready to lose the cold weather gear! After I fueled the bike, I went inside

to the restroom and dressed down. I stopped by the counter for a V-8 and continued on. It was 5:00 pm and I was only halfway down the Dalton. I wanted to make it all the way back to Fairbanks that night!

No other issues as I rode on, just the same dirt roads and potholes that I missed and/or hit on my way up. It was rough! I finally completed the return leg of The Dalton Highway as I turned toward Fairbanks in Livengood! The Dalton may have won one battle, but I won the war!

I arrived in Fairbanks at 10:30 pm. It was still daylight. All the eating places were closed. I asked about a 24-hour restaurant like an IHOP, they laughed! You're in Fairbanks!



When I checked into the hotel, I bought a pack of frozen burritos. In my room, I microwaved them. I was hungry! They were food! Then, I jumped in the shower and passed out on my bed. I was toast!



Pike's Waterfront Hotel

June 10 – First thing in the morning, I found a car wash to clean the bike. Dried mud was everywhere!

Then, I headed toward Chicken, Alaska and the Top of the World Highway! For the first 90 miles there was thick smoke from a big forest fire south of Fairbanks. Like thick fog, visibility was cut way down! I rode through a couple construction sites thinking they were for the fires, but no, just more construction. I was glad to ride out of the smoke and into cleaner air!

Just past Tok, I turned north on Highway 5. From here, it was 65 miles to Chicken.

Although it's home to only about 10 year-round residents, Chicken has a lot to offer. The community is rich in gold mining history and ideally located to take advantage of the Fortymile Wild & Scenic River.

After crossing a bridge over Fortymile River's Mosquito Fork, the Taylor Highway passes through Chicken, a regular stop for many traveling to Eagle or Dawson.

Gold mining began in the area in 1886 and within 10 years, a major prospect was discovered on the Upper Chicken Creek. Bob Mathieson's discovery prompted him to quickly stake his claim and build a cabin. The area instantly became a hub of mining activity for the southern portion of the Fortymile Mining District with more than 700 miners working the streams between 1896 and 1898. According to legend, the town's name originated at a meeting of the resident miners. When trying to

come up with a name for the new tent city, somebody suggested "ptarmigan," which are found in great numbers in the area. All the miners liked it, but none of them could spell it, so they settled on Chicken instead.
www.travelalaska.com



Chicken, Alaska

I stopped for a few pictures in Chicken, then continued on. I was looking forward to Dawson City and a Sourtoe Cocktail!

The 100-mile road between Chicken, Alaska and Dawson City, Yukon is known as The Top of the World Highway. The first 30 miles was paved, then it turned into dirt/gravel the rest of the way.



Top of the World Highway

A great ride on the top of a ridge overlooking valleys below! I only

passed a handful of oncoming cars the entire length of the highway. The small border crossing into Canada only took a few minutes. A memorable ride for sure!

At the end, I rode a ferry across the Yukon River to Dawson City. There was a separate staging line for motorcycles. I was the only one and boarded first.



Crossing the Yukon River

I arrived about 7:00 pm. Dawson City was an awesome dirt-road-town! All of the old wooden buildings were immaculate! I had a reservation at the Midnight Sun Hotel. Inside the hotel was beautiful! My room was small but adequate.



Midnight Sun Hotel

I got cleaned up, and I headed to the Downtown Hotel and Sourdough

Saloon a block away! This was one of the few times that I wore street clothes on the trip.



Home of the Sourdough Saloon

I decided that I better eat before I have a Sourtoe Cocktail. Good idea! The BBQ ribs were great! While I was eating, I got on the waiting list. And, what drink over 80 proof would you like for your cocktail? Yukon Jack whiskey, of course!

The legend of the first "sourtoe" dates back to the 1920's and features a feisty rumrunner named Louie Linken and his brother Otto. During one of their cross-border deliveries, they ran into an awful blizzard. In an effort to help direct his dog team, Louie stepped off the sled and into some icy overflow—soaking his foot thoroughly.

Fearing that the police were on their trail, they continued on their journey. Unfortunately, the prolonged exposure to the cold caused Louie's big toe to be frozen solid. To prevent gangrene, the faithful Otto performed the amputation using a woodcutting axe (and some overproof rum for anesthesia). To commemorate this

moment, the brothers preserved the toe in a jar of alcohol.

Years later, while cleaning out an abandoned cabin, the toe was discovered by Captain Dick Stevenson. After conferring with friends, the Sourtoe Cocktail Club was established, and the rules developed. Since its inception, the club has acquired (by donation) over 25 toes. <https://dawsoncity.ca>

The announcement came: "Mark Campbell to the Sourtoe Cocktail table!"



Ferryboat Captain Terry Lee



The Rules

I picked up my shot of Yukon Jack and headed over to the table where Captain Terry Lee performs the ceremony. The captain logged my information in his ledger prior to the main event.



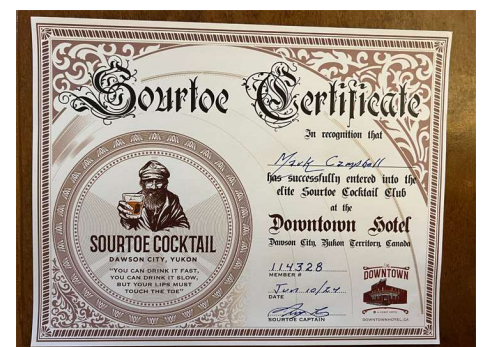
Sourtoe Ceremony

"You can drink it fast or you can drink it slow, but your lips must touch the toe!"



New Member

One of the craziest things that I have done!



Member #114,328

There were several people that joined the club that night! It was a fun time for sure!

June 11 - As I left town the next morning, I passed a gas station. After about a mile, I decided that I better go back and fuel up. The next 323 miles on the Klondike Highway to Whitehorse may not have many gas stations!

I also noticed just outside the nice dirt road business area, there were big rocks piled everywhere! I mean everywhere! Only the road wasn't covered in these piles of rocks, the size of footballs and larger! Big piles surrounded the road and beyond!

What came to mind was mining. I have watched some of those gold mining shows on TV. They remove the big rocks and sift through the finer stuff looking for gold.

Dawson City, Yukon, Canada has large piles of rocks and gravel along the Klondike Highway and back roads near town. These piles are a result of industrial gold dredging operations that took place from the 1920s until the 1960s. The dredges were massive, building-sized machines that would churn up creeks, sift the gravel for gold, and then spit out the leftover refuse. The piles are sometimes described as worm-like and can stretch for miles. Google AI.

The Klondike Highway was similar to a two-lane back road. But, occasionally, there would be a

gravel patch that could last for miles! I did see a moose with her baby, two red foxes and a grouse with chicks. I thought I would see a lot more wildlife. I sure didn't see many cars either!

I stopped at the Braeburn Lodge for one of their World-Famous cinnamon buns. Unfortunately, they were sold out and their oven wasn't working. So, I had a piece of the rhubarb bread. It was pretty good!



No Cinnamon Buns

I arrived in Whitehorse about 4:00 pm. I decided to continue on to Watson Lake. The Airforce Lodge was full, so I made a reservation at Andrea's. There were several other riders when I arrived.



Andrea's

A restaurant adjoined the hotel. I unloaded my gear and took it to the

room, then went to eat. I was hungry!

A guy on a Harley trike looked at my bike and saw the Iron Butt Rally tag. He asked if I knew Chris Comly. I sure do! Chris rode a Harley Sportster in 3 or 4 IBR's! Chris was a good friend and member of the same HOG chapter as this fellow from Philadelphia.

He asked where I was going and where I had been. He made it to the Arctic Circle sign on the Dalton Highway. That's as far as he wanted to ride his trike before heading back home.

I had a nice dinner then went to my room for a hot shower. I got all my things ready for the next day's departure.

June 12 - I left Watson Lake around 8:00 am. I did see two bears just outside of town! I had to backtrack about 15 miles to Junction 37, the Cassiar Highway (AKA Alaska-Yukon Highway). This was a nice two-lane backroad (by our standards). It was 400 miles to Hyder, Alaska, my goal for the day.

In 2011, I had ridden this road. At that time there were forest fires. I was escorted by a pilot truck for many miles. This time, no fires, but I could see a lot of damage and regrowth from 13 years ago!

I enjoyed the ride. I believe they had improved the road a lot since 2011. I saw one big brown bear on the side of the road, but no wildlife after

that. I was surprised, I didn't see more!



Cassiar Highway

This was my third visit to the Stewart, BC and Hyder, AK area. It never gets old. Beautiful!

I rode through Stewart and stopped in Hyder, two miles away. Hyder looked like a ghost town! Businesses closed with little sign of life for this tiny town of 48 residents. I believe the population was close to 100 residents in 2007, when I finished my 49-state ride.

The one business that I did see open was Caroline's Fudge and Souvenir shop! Caroline was one of our (Tom Fuchs and I) final witnesses on the 49/10 (49 states in under 10 days) ride in 2007.



Hyder Alaska

Caroline told me that 30 years ago, the population was younger and motivated. She said today, like us, we've grown older; so has Hyder.



Caroline

Caroline was Ron Ayres contact in Hyder when he created the 49-state record of 7 days, 20 minutes back in 1997. Ron talked about Caroline in his book, *Against the Clock*. She has witnessed many riders completing this epic ride since then. She told me that two riders have contacted her this year. They plan to complete the ride and asked that she be their witness.

From there, I rode back to Stewart to check into the King Edward Hotel. Later, I walked down to the Stewart boardwalk for a beautiful view and photos. I had a wonderful dinner at a local Mexican restaurant.

While eating dinner, a rider approached me and asked if I knew Brian North. I do! Brian is a long-distance Iron Butt friend from the Milwaukee area. Dave Bullock is a friend of his from the same area. It's a small world!

I had a great visit in the area and looked forward to riding with Karen

there in August. Caroline told me the bear viewing area will be active at that time since the salmon will be running. That will be an awesome sight. We're looking forward to it!

June 13 - As I headed south from Stewart, I stopped by Bear Glacier about 20 miles away. Here are three different visits to show you how much this glacier has melted over the years.



Bear Glacier 2007



Bear Glacier 2011



Bear Glacier 2024

I continued on to Prince George, BC. Along the way, I saw two bears. In 2007, I probably saw 25-30 in that stretch. Hopefully, Karen and I will see plenty in August.

I had a nice dinner in Prince George and stayed the night.

June 14 - It was raining as I left Prince George that morning. I was walking through the hotel lobby when a lady told me that I need to wait a while for the rain to subside. I told her that I had places to be and headed out.

It was going to be a beautiful ride through the Canadian Rockies with a lot of wildlife sightings today. WRONG! Rain ruined all of that! I rode over to Jasper, Alberta, then down the Icefields Parkway to Banff. The mountains are beautiful in this area! The cold rain didn't ruin the day. I did end up seeing a couple bears, an elk, some deer and a fox, but not the amount of wildlife that I have seen in the past. It was still a scenic ride!



Mount Robson

The Icefields Parkway is a 230 km (140 mi) long scenic road that parallels the Continental Divide,

traversing the rugged landscape of the Canadian Rockies, travelling through Banff National Park and Jasper National Park. It is named for features such as the Columbia Icefield, visible from the parkway. Wikipedia.

I entered the USA in Eastport, Idaho and stopped in Ponderay for the night.

June 15 - I headed south to Coeur d' Alene, then west to Spokane, Washington. It was windy as I continued southwest through the plains of Washington state. Real windy for over 100 miles!

I continued south to Redmond, Oregon to have dinner with a retired co-worker, Ray Hanshaw, and his wife, April.



Ray Hanshaw

We had a great visit! I think Ray had been retired 4 years. It was good to catch up with him!

I spent the night in a hotel in Redmond. The parking lot was full of BMW motorcycles! Other riders were telling me there was a big BMW rally going on. They were surprised that I didn't know about it! Evidently, I didn't get the memo!

June 16 - I continued south into California and over to "The Center of the Known Universe" Gerlach, Nevada. This area had a lot of Iron Butt history. I've read and heard many stories over the years, so I wanted to visit and check it out! Brunos Country Club was on my list as a place to eat and stay!

The first thing I did was visit the IBA Memorial Park a few miles away. The park is on a dirt road off the main road. It sits on a rise that overlooks the Black Rock Desert Playa area.



Weathered Memorial Sign



IBA Memorial Park

A circle of honor was created as a memorial to fallen riders. Only IBA members can have a memorial stone within the circle. Friends of the IBA can have a memorial stone outside the circle. Sitting at the edge of the

circle, looking out over the Playa is an ideal place to reflect on life.

I paid my respects to several friends I knew within the circle. I'm glad I knew them and glad they enjoyed life when they were here.

Afterward, I rode onto the Playa.

Black Rock Desert - A semi-arid region of lava beds and alkali flats, or playa, in northwestern Nevada. The dry lakebed surface is smooth, firm, and compliant, making it better suited to solid metal wheels than the hard salt of Bonneville. In 1997, the jet-powered Thrust SSC reached a record speed of 763 mph on the Black Rock Desert, needing six miles to accelerate, six miles to stop, and 20 miles of runoff if the parachute failed. Google AI.



Black Rock Desert Playa

Now, I was ready for some of Bruno's Country Club's famous ravioli! While eating, a group of dirt bike riders gathered. After I finished my most excellent dinner, I asked to join the group.

The group was from the Seattle area. Every year, they travel somewhere to spend a week riding

their dirt bikes together. This year, it was Gerlach. One of them trailered all the bikes here, while the others flew in on one's private plane. What a way to travel!



Gerlach, Nevada

Each day, they had a different off-road route to ride in the high desert. They were hardcore and their bikes took a beating. It's great to see a group of friends enjoying life together!



Seattle Dirt Bike Riders

I was interested in their stories, and they were interested in mine. It was a great evening at Bruno's!

The motel wasn't bad for \$73 a night! It was a wonderful experience, I'm glad that I included Gerlach to my adventure!

June 17 - I was out of the room by 7:00 am headed to Carson City and

the beginning of "The Loneliest Highway in America".



Loneliest Highway

U.S. Route 50 across Nevada was named "The Loneliest Road in America" by Life magazine in July 1986. The name originates from large desolate areas traversed by the route, with few or no signs of civilization. The highway crosses several large desert valleys separated by numerous mountain ranges towering over the valley floors, in what is known as the Basin and Range province of the Great Basin. Wikipedia

I enjoyed this desolate ride across Highway 50 almost as much as the Mountains in Canada. It was beautiful in its own way! Most of the way, it was only me and the Mormon crickets.

May 28, 2024, Mormon crickets are once again creating chaos in Nevada, where officials said they caused multiple crashes on an interstate highway over the weekend.

The pesky creatures resemble fat grasshoppers and are known in parts of the western United States to

appear, at times, in massive clusters that may completely cover the side of a building or an entire section of a road.

Although the Nevada Department of Agriculture says Mormon cricket populations have decreased over the last few years in most places in Nevada, they've remained about as large as they've ever been in two counties, Eureka and Elko. In Eureka, there were so many Mormon crickets spread across the highway that they contributed to several accidents on Saturday.
cbsnews.com

These Mormon crickets were on Highway 50 all the way across the state of Nevada.

As I was riding along, I thought to myself, I'm glad they aren't flying up into my windshield, that would be a mess! When I stopped for fuel, I looked down at my boots. I had bug juice from my knees to my boots! Evidently as I rode over them, the Mormon crickets hopped up into my boots and pant legs!



Loneliness Highway 50

It was windy as I rode across Nevada, but nothing like the wind I

encountered when I crossed into Utah. I've ridden in some bad wind before, but never anything this strong!

For 88 miles, it was all I could do to keep the bike on the road. I did slow down to 70 mph. It was brutal! It got so bad that I focused on my breathing to keep my mind and body sharp and alert during this dangerous turbulent ride!

I would slowly inhale and exhale while being vocal about it. Hearing myself breathe and controlling my breath were meditation techniques that I'd been taught in the past. It was a vital part of this ride! Never in my life have I really needed the breath training until this point! For me, it worked well! And, I thank one of my martial arts teachers, Dr. Gyi, for the lessons learned!

I arrived in Delta, Utah at 7:00 pm. There were tree branches all over the town streets from the wind! I decided, I needed to find a room and chill out for the night. Unfortunately, there were only a couple Mom and Pop motels, and both were sold out! I decided to keep going!

An hour later, I found a room at a Super 8 Motel in Salina, Utah. I'll take it! As I checked in, I was telling the lady about the brutal wind that I had rode through. She said it was bad and that two travel trailers and a semi-truck had been blown over in that area today! Wow! I can believe it!

June 18 - Our 46th wedding anniversary! I called Karen to wish her a happy anniversary before heading out!

Karen was in Indiana visiting with her sisters and other close relatives. She spent 10 days up there while I was on my ride!

Finally, back on an interstate! I jumped on I-70 eastbound! As I was riding along, the wind started to pick up! I thought oh no! But, it quickly subsided! Whew! I didn't need any more of that wind!

It was a beautiful, clear, sunny, day as I rode across the rest of Utah and Colorado. The Rocky Mountains never get old! In Denver, I was in stop and go traffic, so I called my BMW service department in Memphis to set up an appointment. It was Tuesday, I can have the bike to you when you open on Friday morning. Oh, and I need the bike back no later than Saturday! Tim said, they'd take care of me!

This was the first time in three weeks that I had seen 80-degree temperatures! But, it didn't last too long. I made it through the Denver traffic. I rode through light rain and cooler temperatures as I continued on. I did stop in Burlington on the east side of the state. There, I had a nice anniversary dinner. I sent Karen a picture of my beer as a toast to celebrate! Cheers! Then, off to the hotel for a good night's sleep.

June 19 - I continued east on I-70 through Kansas to Salina, where I

headed south through Wichita. I was in very familiar territory as I've ridden through there many times. Up to this point, the weather had been cool! Karen had been warning me of the heatwave they've been dealing with in the middle part of the country. She said wait until you get back in the USA, you'll need to be careful of the hot temperatures! Well, the temperature hadn't been a problem up to this point! When I stopped in Tulsa, Oklahoma for some Oklahoma Joe's BBQ, the temperature finally hit 80 degrees. Karen couldn't believe how lucky I'd been dodging the heat wave.



One of the Best

After a great BBQ lunch, I rode on to Van Buren, Arkansas for the night, a place we stay quite often when we're traveling west on I-40.

June 20 - I was up and out of the hotel by 4:30 am. I was excited to be so close to home! It was the first time in three weeks that I used my auxiliary lights; The last time was Kansas City, at the beginning of my trip!

It was an uneventful ride across Arkansas. I was home by 9:00 am!

Since I was home so early, I started laundry. Karen was still in Indiana and wouldn't arrive home for a few days. I decided to get my laundry done, the bike serviced, repack, then head down to Key West to complete the ride as soon as possible. I would see Karen when I returned!

At noon, I got caught up around the house. I rode the bike over to Performance Plus for service. That gave them more time to work on the bike. I uber'd home from the dealership!

Ahhh! At home in my own bed!

June 21 - This was only my second day of not moving since June 1. My other day was in Fairbanks on the 7th of June. And, Karen was right, it was HOT!

That afternoon, Performance Plus called. The bike was ready! A day early! That was great! I rode the K1600 up to the dealer and swapped bikes. The K-bike needed a major service too for our trip to Alaska in August. Kudos to Tim and Casey for all their support!



Casey & Tim BMW Service

Now, I could leave the next day, Saturday, June 22, instead of Sunday, June 23.

June 22 - I was rolling at 5:00 am.

I was ready to get this ride done! It was hot and I was wore out as I rode down to Ocala. I stopped at a Cracker Barrel to cool down and eat dinner. Once I checked into the hotel, the cold shower felt good!

June 23 - It was Sunday, I was hoping traffic around Wally World and the Keys wouldn't be too bad. I was right! But, the heat didn't let up! It was brutal.

It was a bright, sunny, morning as I arrived at the first key, Key Largo, around 11:00 am.

Crossing over from one key to another never gets old. I enjoy riding the bike over all the bridges and looking out over the water! Beautiful!



Simonton Beach

My first stop in Key West was Simonton Beach. By now, it was 1:30 pm. The beach was a popular spot on this hot day! I showed up in my riding suit, set up my tripod, walked out in the middle of the

beach for some selfies of me gathering my final sand/water sample for this ride, folded up my tripod and left. The crowd probably thought I was nuts!

The Key West Postcard Mural was only a couple of blocks away, so I went there next for some pictures.



Photo Bombed

Back on the bike, I headed over to the Most Southernmost Point Buoy for another picture. This time, there's a line of tourists at least a block long, much more activity than 5:30 am during the beginning of this trip!



Busy Buoy

Now, it was time to end this ride! I stopped at the first gas station I saw. Official end time - 2:08 pm, June 23, 2024.

Trip Stats:

Start time in Key West - May 25, 2024, at 5:33 am (Eastern Time). Odometer 112,789.

End/start time from Prudhoe Bay, Alaska - June 8, 2024, at 9:40 pm (Alaskan Time). Odometer 118,734.

End Time in Key West - June 23, 2024, at 2:08 pm (Eastern Time). Odometer 126,112.

UCC #1 - 5,945 miles in 14 days in 19 hours and 7 minutes.

UCC#2 - 7,378 miles in 14 days, 12 hours and 28 minutes

Grand total of 13,323 total odometer miles from Key West to Prudhoe Bay back to Key West in 29 days, 7 hours and 35 minutes.

I had completed the UCCC Insanity! What a ride! I started this ride 13 years ago but didn't complete it. I wasn't sure I'd ever get another chance! It was an incredible adventure!

I really enjoyed all the diversity this ride had to offer, starting with the Keys in Florida, through the flyover states, across Canada and up to Alaska and the Arctic Ocean. Then, a different route back to Key West. Awesome and amazing!

The next thing was to get to my hotel and cool down, find something to eat and enjoy a few hours in Key West before I headed home in the morning. So, off to the hotel, I went!

I found a great price at a Marriot Courtyard. It was an excellent place to stay! It took couple of hours to cool down before I took a shower!

Afterward, I walked next door to the Stoned Crab for dinner. It was an open-air bar and grill overlooking a water inlet. I enjoyed my seafood meal, then decided to visit Sloppy Joe's Bar.

Since I cleaned up, I uber'd the 2 ½ miles to Duval Street. I sat at Sloppy Joe's and listened to the live band for a little while.



Sloppy Joe's

Later, I walked down Duval. It was busy and I wasn't in the mood. So, I uber'd back to the hotel.

When I got back to the hotel, I talked to Karen on the phone. She reminded me that I had planned on visiting the Key West Cemetery to search for iguanas. Thanks for the reminder!

I had told Karen on the first leg of my trip to Key West, I was disappointed that I didn't see any iguanas. I had heard the Key West Cemetery was full of them. That's where I needed to go!

In shorts and sandals, I hopped on the bike, turned my ball cap around

backwards and headed to the cemetery!

As I pulled into the main entrance of the cemetery, I was greeted by a bright green iguana! He paused halfway across the road before he ran away. I thought, this is what I came to see!

Not too far from there was a big daddy! He was at least 6 foot long from head to tail! I wondered what he weighed.



Big Daddy



Iguanas

I must have seen at least a hundred iguanas as I rode up and down the driveways within the cemetery gates. They were all sizes and all shades of green! It was totally amazing to me! The locals look at them as rodents since they are an invasive species that is out of control!

After my iguana adventure, I headed back to the hotel to prepare for the next day's Key Lime 1000 on the way home!

The Key Lime 1000 requires you to buy and eat a piece of Key Lime pie in Key West during your ride (1,000 miles in 24 hours).

This means a receipt showing you purchased the pie in Key West and a selfie of you eating it!

The earliest place that I could find to get a piece of Key Lime pie was the Cuban Coffee Queen. It opened at 6:30 am. I knew this place! It has the postcard mural painted on it! So, that's where I started!

June 24 - I was up early! Too early! I had some time to kill before leaving. Across the street was a gas station where I started the clock. Official start time - 6:26 am (Eastern Time). By the time I arrive at the Cuban Coffee Queen, a short line had formed! This must be a popular coffee spot!

I ordered a piece of pie. When I received it, I asked a lady if she could take a picture of me eating my pie. She was waiting on her order. I explained to her that it was part of a ride. She was glad to help!



Key Lime Pie at 6:30 am

It was extremely humid that morning and it was only 6:30! After eating my pie, I jumped on the bike and headed toward the mainland.

Traffic was light! I made great time crossing the Overseas Highway, hopping from key to key. I stopped in Key Largo at 9:00 am for a V-8 and a breakfast sandwich. I needed to dilute the sugar rush from the pie! The temperature was heating up!

At least the traffic flowed well on this Monday morning. Rush hour had already passed as I rode around Miami. No traffic issues in the Orlando/Wally World area either!

Once I got off of Florida's Turnpike and onto I-75, traffic was stop and go. I decided to jump on the left motorcycle lane and go around it. It must have been five miles long! I was glad to get around that mess!

As I continued north, the thermometer on the bike was displaying 103 degrees! Yikes! That's not taking account for the heat index! I decided to stop near Lake City to cool down and eat lunch at Sonny's BBQ. I took my time and drank plenty of tea.

From there, I jumped on I-10 west past Marianna where I caught Highway 231 north to Dothan, Alabama. I stayed on 231 up to Montgomery where I jumped on I-65 to Birmingham. I decided I better stop at the end of my 1,000 miles on the west side of Alabama. It would do my body good to end my Key Lime 1000 and stop for the evening. No sense overdoing it!

I stopped at a gas station at the Winfield exit on I-22. Official end time - 10:32 pm (Central Time) for a total of 1,016 miles in 17 hours and 6 minutes. Not a bad time considering the run through the keys!

I stopped at the Huddle House for a late-night snack before checking into the hotel. That cold shower felt wonderful! I was toast!

June 25 – I was on the road by 6:30 am. I was ready to get home and see Karen!

On the way, I stopped at the Cracker Barrel in Tupelo. From there, it was a great ride home!

As I was riding into our neighborhood, I could see some big signs at the end near our house! The

Welcome Home, Mark sign brought tears to my eyes! Karen, I love you!

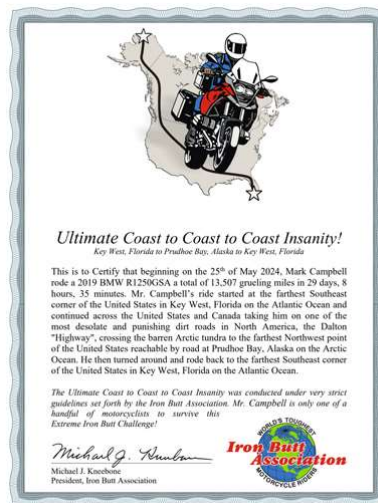
I rode the bike up into our yard for a special photo op! There couldn't have been a better ending!

Total miles from home to home: 15,800 miles

Total time from home to home: 32 Days, 18 hours and 45 minutes.



To Start



UCCC Insanity



From End



Welcome Home, Mark