

e-Postcard from Kalispell

7/13/2004

Hello to all,

Four days and 1,887 miles ago I left home in Carlsbad, CA. Since then I've passed through well over a dozen national and state parks, monuments, forests and wildernesses. I've met wonderful people, had amazing adventures, spontaneously ejected a pannier box off the bike at 70 MPH, ridden over 200 miles on dirt, 1,637 miles on two lane roads and since I turned off of I-5 north of Los Angeles, exactly five miles on expressways.

And tomorrow morning, we'll ride 80 miles north of here to the Canadian border and begin the real adventure we came here for. We'll turn our bikes south and over the next ten days ride dirt roads down the Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico, some 2,300 miles away.

I'll try to get some updates out to you along the way.

Be well,
Doug

PS – some photos of the trip so far follow



Of all the gas stations in all the world, you had to ride into mine...

As I was riding by a gas station in Eastern Idaho today, I happened to look at the pumps just as Laura was taking off her helmet to buy some gas. She kept quiet as I pulled up next to her and flipped up my helmet to save the surprise for Rick. I pulled off my helmet and asked him, "Hey buddy, you got a license for that spear?" Much laughter, joy, hugs and astonishment for all of us immediately followed.

Rick Wetzel and Laura Seaver rode with Steph and I around Sub-Saharan Africa last fall. It was the first time I'd seen either of them since our last dinner in Cape Town. Laura had hosted Steph and I on two of our visits to Seattle when we were procuring the bike, and shown us both warm friendship and gracious welcoming into the Seattle group of riders that made up the core of the Africa tour. Rick is the most positive and happy person I think I've ever known in my life and made the Africa trip a joy, even in its most challenging moments. My question to him referred to a spear he purchased along our African route and attached to his left fork leg, where it still rides today, a proud trophy of his Africa tour.

They were on the annual Idaho BMW club off road ride and had just come down off of the mountain in search of gas before heading back out into the wilderness and later in the week to Spokane, WA, for the BMW national rally. We were riding by on our way to Montana to start the CDR. Two seconds difference for their arrival or our passing by and I never would have seen them.



Why We Ride...

The road over Lolo pass from Montana into eastern Idaho. This was the area that Lewis and Clark traveled and it remains a national treasure today to every motorcycle rider who has had the chance to savor its 77 miles of sweeping curves alongside a crystal clear, rushing river. Idaho's stunning natural beauty is apparently the best kept secret in the nation, as the roads are surprisingly empty of motor homes and travel trailers.