

My 2012 Cross Country Trip ... 11,217 Miles in 30 Days

By

Carl Levin

Part 1: Souderton, PA to Dubois, WY (2400 miles)



I call my motorcycles my Valium because of the way riding relaxes me and clears my mind. I started riding when I was 15 and my first bike was an old Indian that kept me broke just to keep it running. I have always loved the outdoors and they are much more enjoyable on a bike instead of in a car. You see things that you normally would not due to fewer distractions. You also meet some of the greatest people through riding and I have friends in other countries and states because of that. I have close to 500,000 miles on my behind and hope to keep in the saddle for many years to come.

I like to make a trip out west every few years - the riding is great and I have made some good friends on those trips. On this trip my plan was to meet up with friends in Missouri, head for Sturgis, do some touring before heading for Coombs, Vancouver Island. My friend, Rod, lives there and I hoped to ride with him and his friends, then head for Tucson, AZ to visit my cousin Bob and then return home.

I left Souderton, PA on August 2, 2012 and headed for Eureka, MO to meet up with Joe & Mary Brice for the first leg of my trip.

We had met in Colorado in 2010 and have taken trips together each year since. (Here we are in Nemo, SD). The weather was great for riding and I decided to take the quickest



route there by the Pa Turnpike and then onto Rt. 70 west. I spent the first night in Huber Heights, OH, (537 mi) woke early and was on the road by 7:00 AM. I arrived at Joe & Mary's home (400 mi) that afternoon and was given a tour of the area. We planned to leave by 6:30 the following morning.

August 4: We awoke to a major thunderstorm. Joe went onto the computer and checked the weather patterns. We decided to head to Sturgis, SD by way of Nebraska, as it was stormy everywhere east of St. Louis. Even then, we had to wait until 9:30 AM to start out as there was very heavy rain in Eureka. Finally, we decided to leave in a light rain which then became a drizzle. We rode for an hour or so when the skies cleared and nice weather settled in. At 7 PM we arrived at Blair, NE checked into a Super 8 Motel, ready for a hot meal and a warm dry bed (400 mi).

August 5: At 7:30 AM we left Blair and stopped at Indian Reservation Park then travelled through both the Omaha and Winnebago Indian Reservations. We crossed the Chief Standing Bear Bridge into South Dakota, took some pictures and then re-entered Nebraska. It was cool riding until 1:00 PM and then got very hot with temperatures close to 100°. Joe & Mary had reservations at a motel that was booked up

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so I took a chance and pulled into The Westerner Motel in Chadron, NE (520 mi) as I saw a few bikes in the lot. What a great surprise. This motel is about the most biker friendly place I have ever stayed at. The owners, Russ and Mardi Milton, had beer and sodas at picnic tables and even some snacks at no charge. The other guests were also very friendly. Most of them stay there every year and commute from there to Sturgis a few times during bike week. The place is clean and affordable.

August 6: I grabbed breakfast, hooked up with the Brice's at 7:30AM and we headed for Sturgis, stopping in Hot Springs, SD, a town that has waterfalls on its main street and a lot of coffee shops and restaurants. We headed for Wind Cave National Park and saw more bison there than anywhere else on our trip. We then stopped in Nemo, SD for a break and some pictures, and then headed for Sturgis. Upon arrival we rode through the town and did some gawking, and then Joe and Mary headed for the campsite where they had reservations; I checked in to the Howard Johnson in Rapid City (180 mi) then rode around the countryside and took some pictures.



August 7-8 -9: Maryann Brown flew in to Rapid City Airport early Tuesday morning and we immediately headed for Sturgis as she had not been there before and was anxious to see it. We made the rounds,

picked up our event pins at the HOG booth and spent some money on souvenirs. Joe's phone crapped out, because Verizon seems to be the only phone that works consistently around Sturgis. We kept trying to get hold of one another, but could not until Thursday evening when Joe bought a Verizon phone and we were able to finally connect.

While there we met Gilles and Nouella from Montreal. They are a husband and wife truck driving team who drove their rig to area for a delivery and decided to go to Sturgis and take in the sights on their bike. Neither one spoke much English or knew the area well, so they decided to tag along. We headed for the Badlands National Park. I



had skipped it in 2010 because of 117° heat. Its' beauty captivated all of us. We toured through Custer Wildlife Preserve, Norbeck



Preserve, Windcave National Park and Devil's Tower, and then headed for Deadwood where I got my oil

changed at the Lucas tent. We headed for the town of Lead and encountered rain and whopper size hail stones.



We wanted to get back to the hotel, but could not just

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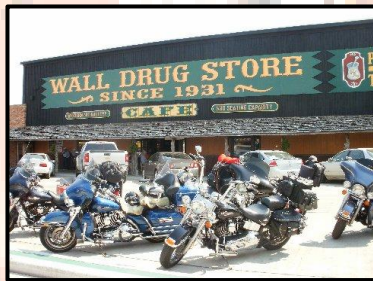
bypass Spearfish Canyon Pass due to its' reputation for beauty. We returned to the hotel, got cleaned up then met Joe & Mary for dinner downtown. After eating a great



meal, we walked around town, shopped for more shirts and souvenirs and had good conversations

and company. We said our goodbyes' and headed for our motels as it was already dark and deer, bears and bison are plentiful. (200 mi)

Friday we rode through Vanocker Canyon and then visited Wall Drugs. It is a major tourist attraction (about 2 million per year) and a



must see when you are in the area. We got together with Gilles

and Nouella for dinner; I could not believe how much of my high school French had started to return to me after more than fifty years. (110 mi)

August 10: Maryann was picked up at 4:30 AM by the airport shuttle. The great thing about her flying in, among other



things, is that she brought a suitcase and I did not have to ship clothes home this time. I went back to

sleep for a couple of hours and headed out at 7:30 AM taking RT. 90 to Rtes. 20 and 26.

It is a longer Rt., but much more scenic.

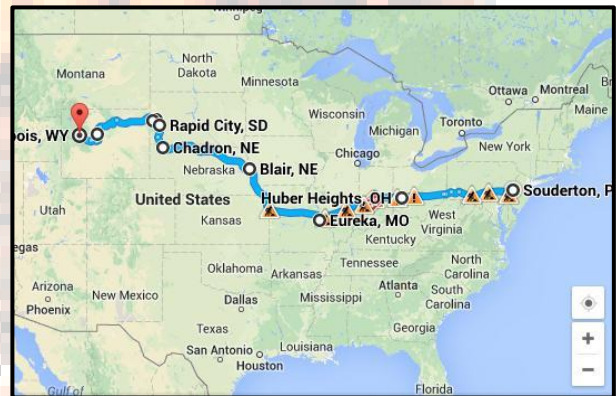
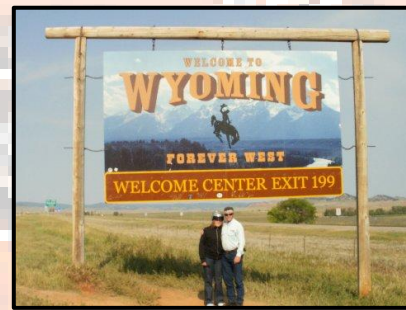
Wind River Canyon on the Wind River Indian Reservation is absolutely

breathhtaking; just spectacular vistas. I

encountered bad crosswinds all day, some

downright dangerous, and spent the night at

a Super 8 in Dubois, WY. (460 mi)



**First leg of the trip: Souderton, PA to
Dubois, WY - 2400 Miles**