

(left-right) Gib, E.B., Travis & Judy preparing to depart from Chester's Harley-Davidson 6/9/2010

## DAY TWENTY-FIVE/Hoka Hey 14 Saturday, July 3/10

Travis and I finished 116 and 117 out of 683 starters and it is not yet determined as it may never be, whether the ones who came in prior to us actually rode the course as required or simply blasted up the interstate to save time.

We will see.

We feel very good about the results. We are at the finish, safe, and happy having completed the course exactly as prescribed.

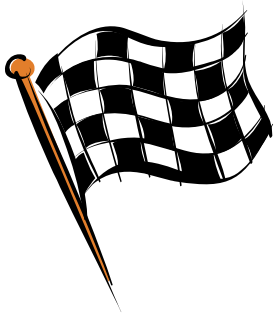
Of course this morning my fingers will not bend and my vision is all blurry. Shows how fast you go downhill when you stay off of a motorcycle for too long.

E.B.



## DAY TWENTY-FOUR/Hoka Hey 13 Friday, July 2/10

Well gang at this point there are three things for certain ---



**#1** is that the race will have a winner

**#2** is it ain't us and

**#3** is there are no losers in this deal  
Feeling pretty good at this point.

**FINISH!!!**

3:30 pm AK time  
9101 total miles  
13 days

To paraphrase John Kennedy, “we do the meaningful things in life not because they are easy but because they are hard.” And it certainly was.

Another statesman said “these are the times which try men's souls.” If my soul had only known thirteen days ago it may have elected to stay in bed.

I can now say to anyone who is adept at long distance riding "there you go, that's how it's done.

The true Heroes are the two fine silver machines milling around outside with their peers who both have a big grin on their handlebars. If asked they can now say "there you go that's also how it's done!!

E.B.

## DAY TWENTY-THREE/Hoka Hey 12 Thursday, July 1/10

Today we rode from Haines Junction to Wascia via Fairbanks. About 800 miles starting at 6 am and arrived at 2 am -- 20 hours riding.  
Heading for the finish - about 250 miles to go.

Rode some of the worst roads I have seen between Destruction Bay and the US border.  
Really scary stuff.

I will let everyone know when we finish.

Feeling pretty tired. May sleep for a week!!!!

E.B.

## DAY TWENTY-TWO/Hoka Hey 11 Wednesday, June 30/10

### **AM:**

We rode over 800 miles yesterday departing around four am and getting here around midnight. If any of this is redundant I apologize as everything is just running together right now. We missed running out of gas last night by twenty five miles or so. A close call.

We now have three five hundred mile days left to ride. My hands are shaking as I write this and this is the best I will be all day. Well no one said it would be easy and they were correct.

On down the road.

E.B.

## DAY TWENTY-ONE/Hoka Hey 10 Tuesday, June 29/10

We are in Dawson Creek at the southern end of the Alaska Highway. About 1500 miles to go, so in three days we will be there. Things are beginning to fall off my bike mainly associated with the tour pack we installed prior to the trip. I think I will get to Homer and ship a bunch of stuff home, lose the Tour Pack or ship it home. Several options.

Started at four this morning and plan on riding through the night. Gas will be our primary concern, but if we can not get it we will just lie down right there until we can.

Been a great day so far with a very small amount of rain late this pm.

Riding on.

E.B.

## DAY TWENTY/Hoka Hey 9 Monday, June 28/10

### **AM:**

We are approaching the border so I'll let you know how that goes.

Talked with Judy this am, she is getting behind due in part to her riding partner not wanting to ride at night. If we were not riding at night we would not make it. Gib started home this morning, he had several issues and thought this was best for his situation. We will miss him. He was great company.

It's now Travis and me. On we go...

### **PM:**

We rode from Helena to Lake Louise today. We lost Gib who determined several factors including a medical matter made it wise for him to go back to Reno. Judy is attempting to catch up with Travis and me but at this point that would be very hard.

We have five days remaining and about 2000 miles to go. We will make it unless something goes very wrong.

We arrived at midnight and plan to depart at 4am. Just another normal day....

E.B.

PS. We are definitely NOT staying in the Chateau Lake Louise. We are on the other end of the demographic scale tonight.

## DAY NINETEEN/Hoka Hey 8 Sunday, June 27/10

Well ladies and gentlemen, until you have ridden ten miles on an incredibly muddy and rutted road and spent the night on the ground beside your bike in a driving rain storm you just ain't lived. We did just that at the Wounded Knee check point on the Pine Ridge reservation last night. It was simply wonderful but its detail description will have to wait until it can be given in a little more private forum.

We are having breakfast in Rapid City heading for Missoula and on into Canada --- finally. Should be in Missoula tonight.

Until later , your friend, wet and cold!!

Moving on!!

E.B.

## DAY EIGHTEEN/Hoka Hey 7 Saturday, June 26/10

**AM:**

We are leaving Rock Springs, WY and going to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Rapid City, SD, then on to Missoula, MT around midnight. We are really getting tired but pushing on.

Bikes doing well. No issues there.

Got into Rock Springs at 2 this am. Dead tired, daft and certainly dumb. 1300 to go today.

Disappointment at check point last night. There are about 130 riders roughly riding with us. This includes everyone up to the leaders. The individual checking us in stated that most of the others do not have proof of route such as gas receipts which we have.

Life is good albeit hard.

E.B.

## DAY SEVENTEEN/Hoka Hey 6 Friday, June 25/10

Went into Utah around Lake Powell and came out at Vernal. Went on in Wyoming to Rock Springs where next check point is located.

No sleep tonight. Hope to be in Black Hills in the morning.

4500 miles so far. 2500 to go. 6 days on road so far. Should be there in three or four more days, we hope!!

E.B.

## DAY SIXTEEN/Hoka Hey 5 Thursday, June 24/10

Well here we are on US64 about 50 miles east of Raton in New Mexico at a lovely rest area complete with breathable picnic tables under cover. We will sleep for about 4 hours and then move on. We should make Payson by lunch today. The leaders just now arrived there.

Just to clarify earlier remarks we have zero chance of actually winning but we are now in the top 50 out of 800 or so. We are feeling good about our progress. We have covered about 3000 miles in 4 days. Not too bad considering the immense path finding effort. Travis is a marvel at that. He just has a second sense about the route.

Today on the fifth day we will have covered around 3500 miles which is half way. Puts us in Homer, Alaska on the July 1st. Not bad if we can make it.

### **(END OF DAY RECAP)**

Rode from Oklahoma to Payson, AZ about 550 miles. Long hard day. Hot again. Sign issues causing problems for some but we are home. No problems for us. Not sure of our standing but continue to pass bikes. Dinner in Globe. Slept in Payson. Cooler there.

Pushing on going to next checkpoint in Rock Springs, WY. Then to Missoula and on into Canada.

More tomorrow,  
E.B.

***(SIDE NOTE: from Chester's Harley-Davidson dealership. Some friends, family & staff rode up to meet E.B., Gib, & Travis in Globe, AZ for a quick dinner with them. They are all in good spirits, having a great time and appreciated all the support!! After a short break they were back on the road and hope to reach the third checkpoint late that evening.)***

## DAY FIFTEEN/Hoka Hey 4 Wednesday, June 23/10

Got 8hrs good sleep last night. 5pm till 1 am. Found campground with great shower.

Passed leading group asleep about 3am. Other groups ahead but they are looking over their shoulder. "Who are those guys?" We're chasing them and they have to sleep! When they do there we go!!

In western Oklahoma going into CO/NM soon. Travis is mentally spending the money. That picked up pace 10mph

Leaders are having their support crews remove road signs. Bummer!

We are doing great. Can't wait to write about riding through Ozarks at night. Beautiful!!

More soon,  
E.B.

## DAY FOURTEEN/Hoka Hey 3 Tuesday, June 22/10

Bit in mouth ---- Headed west ---- fast!!

Beginning of fourth day --- going into Oklahoma.

Last check point was in Memphis. Next one in Rock Springs, WY. Riding from Memphis to Rock Springs via Phoenix! 2,000 miles so far in three days. In Rock Springs it will be 4,000 miles in five days!

Everything going well. Slept in a church entry last night and bathed in a mud puddle!!

Great time so far. Serious contenders are now less than 100!

E.B.

## DAY THIRTEEN/Hoka Hey 2 Monday, June 21/10

Expect to cross Mississippi late today.

Head down and going west! Hope to cross Mississippi by nightfall.

It's about 9 o'clock and we are crossing the Mississippi. We are now in the top 60 based on check-in in Memphis not counting those disqualified due to route errors which we, of course, have none.

E.B.

## DAY TWELVE/Hoka Hey 1 Sunday, June 20/10

Good grief! So much to say and such a tiny keyboard! After 22 hours and 1,100 miles we are in Columbus, Ga. heading to Memphis. It's a complete zoo. We are doing great. I can't wait to write the full narrative. No one will believe it!

More later.

E.B.

## DAY ELEVEN Saturday, June 19/10

Well campers, we are off at 4:30 am (yes am as in the morning) so I thought a final progress report from the comfort of a hotel room, until we reach our objective, was in order.

We spent all day wishing we were not here. That we were on the open road going to ..... well I don't know where but it would be better than this waiting. After all, we have now been here for about two days. Normally two days in paradise would be great but we long to get on with it.

We went to the Rider's Meeting this afternoon which told a lot about what this "race" is and is not. First of all when we all began to file into the large ball room, there was quite a line going in. The cause?? Everyone was signing a list to prove they were there. And, in due course in comes Jim Redcloud, the main cheese. Jim takes one look at the list process, throws the list away and pronounces, "Hell, they are all here, lets get on with it". And we did. The rest of the presentation went about the same way. Can we use a GPS? Answer: "Use anything you want, it won't help at all. Most of these roads are not even on the GPS database". The use of a GPS was specifically outlawed prior to this point. Most questions went exactly like that. "How do we line up in the morning for the start??" Answer: "Line up any way you want. An hour or two will make absolutely no difference in what you are about to do". And then the BIG question: "Have you really got the half million?" Answer: "Trust me. South Dakota law requires that anyone advertising they will pay a prize to be able to pay the prize. I'm a lawyer, I know about such things."



Well that about takes care of that. It's organized bedlam. We were told to be around the starting line about 5 tomorrow morning so we plan to be there.

Judy has finally been recognized as, according to her, the youngest woman in the race who has accumulated the most years. She was interviewed earlier in the day on an audio track. Tonight they are filming her in the bar at the host hotel. We told her not to forget her friends who got her to this high position in life. Shoot, I knew Judy when she didn't even have highway pegs (which we installed in Naples on the way down). Characteristically, she said she would be embarrassed by all the attention. I told her to be proud and enjoy as only a small percentage of Americans could or would do what she is doing. Have fun with it!

Our tanks are full (and our bikes also are filled with gas) and we are packed and ready to go. I had a short (very short) period of decision making where I was trying to put things in the top of my bag which I would need along the road. It finally dawned on me there were not such things. I won't need anything along the way, period.

To celebrate our departure, we all went out to a great meal at --- you guessed it --- The Waffle House. It was great!

From now on I will attempt to send brief updates on our progress, we maybe in remote out of the place areas.

Until later-- Hoka Hey.

E.B.

## DAY TEN Friday, June 18/10 & DAY NINE Thursday, June 17/10

Well we are now in Key West.

On Thursday we rode from Naples to Key West. A good short ride of about 250 miles across US 41 where I had promised the Alligators would be out all along the road side. No Alligators!

The Ranger in the Alligator Center along the road tells us that they go hide under a stump in hot weather. Not that it's much cooler under the stump but there is always the outside chance a couple of feet may become available if someone sits on the stump. Some of us did see one gator asleep in the bushes at the visitor's center. There was a rumor that it was a paid member from central casting on duty for the day.

We did see the Everglades; most of us for the first time. The water was, well, in the ditch where we expected it to be and the grass went forever across the prairies. We realized that the Everglades are home for a couple of Indian tribes so we will probably come back across this way when the Hoka Hey Challenge begins.

Thursday was hot. And I mean HOT!! Our bikes were running on one cylinder and not doing very well at all. We are doing even worse but we pushed ahead.

We stopped at Outdoor World or Bass Pro Shop in Marathon Key and had lunch. --- When I just typed the preceding words I mistyped "had lunch" as "hid lunch". Now there is one thing we are definitely not doing - hiding lunch, or breakfast or dinner. We need to stop eating. Maybe we are just putting on fat for the trip so we won't have to eat as much along the way. That's what the bears which are waiting on us up north do. However, in their case, we are the fat!

Anyway, up until this morning we had spotted a grand total of about 10 Hoka Heyers and their bikes. A little short of 1,000, and it had us worried. When we arrived at Key West, coming across the bridge onto the island we see a big electronic sign saying that the road will be closed on Sunday Morning at 6am for a half an hour. Now that is good news. A sign (literally) something is really going to happen.



We all had reservations to register at the event office on Friday morning between 9 and 10 o'clock so we get up and ride over to the host hotel. There, at the curb, is our friend Jim Redcloud the promoter of the event. Another good sign. The registration process went slow but well. No issues. We now got to know a significant number of the participants, as we all got an extended time to chat while waiting in line. We are all jovial and ready to get started.

After registration we went to get a bite to eat --- yes, again --- and it dawned on us we have another full day to kill on Saturday. Bummer, we are ready to leave. Right now!

When I registered, I was asked for the registration to my bike. I explained that there was not one. I am riding an inventory bike which belongs to our dealership and it is not registered. That caused a stir as the staff immediately began to mumble about stolen bikes. Knowing them personally helped, but they still had no idea which block on the form my bike fit in. Finally they recorded the VIN number from my insurance policy, wished me well when, or should I say if, I arrive at the Canadian border with an untitled bike and let me go on my way.

Tonight there is a roving party all along Duval Street (for those who may not know Key West, Duval Street is the epicenter of the bars, bands, cross dressers, and undressers. Oh! don't forget the local roosters and cats. Quite a scene.) The party will go on at about a dozen bars and lasts until everyone gives out. In Key West nothing begins until around midnight and everyone gets up the next morning after it's already afternoon. Since I have a full day to kill tomorrow, I'll let you know how it goes.

The Hoka Hey crowd is universally not the hardened biker crowd you may think they would be. There is a lot of Middle America signed up for this thing. Many of them are riding mid sized bikes which do not appear to be outfitted for long distance travel. No windshields, no saddlebags, no tour packs, no highway pegs. Makes us wonder if they have ever done anything like this before. Of course the majority of bikes are baggers well equipped for the ride.

We have been telling everyone that we rode in from Phoenix and we left "last weekend" and were here on Thursday. Well a little white lie never hurts if it improves the odds. Their eyes do open a bit after they divide the 2,500 miles from Phoenix by three or four days. Certainly gets their attention. At one point when we had only seen 10 or so other riders, we were beginning to think the odds were getting better. But alas, there is plenty of bona fide competition.

More when I come to in the morning.  
E.B.

**DAY EIGHT** Wednesday, June 16/10

TRAVELLING

## DAY SEVEN Tuesday, June 15/10

Today we rode from Perry, Florida to Naples, Florida. Mostly good rural riding with a small amount of urban mess. We planned to ride around 330 miles today but due to some lack of intelligence, we rode around 360 miles. Well, I didn't know the turn was so obscure. They should have marked it better.

Robert Hobbs left us in the morning and rode back to his home in Nashville. He had about 600 miles to cover and, believe it or not, almost beat us to our destination. I talked to Robert around 5pm after we arrived in Naples around 4 and he was at home making himself a drink. I thought he probably needed it after such a ride.

When we arrived in Naples, we went to Naples Harley-Davidson and were greeted like home folks. They are certainly good people. They were expecting us and after we checked in to the hotel next door, we carried our bikes back over and they stored them for the night.

We met another Hoka Hey rider, Tom, who joined us at Hooters for dinner. Nice guy. Almost as crazy as the rest of us.

We began to discuss our plans for the logistics along the race. The issue of sleeping with the bears came up. I assured everyone that I had heard that a person does not have to outrun the bear, just his fellow travelers. On that score, I told everyone I had purchased and brought a blow-up doll in the shape of a running girl, onto which I had applied liberal amounts of honey and chocolate. All I have to do is throw this thing over my shoulder and hit the road. And if the bear doesn't come along, who knows?

We were discussing with Judy the alligators along the road to Key West. We opinioned that most of the big ones had learned over the years to go out and lie in the road upside down as if they had been hit by a passing car and when a motorcycle came along, they will wiggle a bit to act injured. And when the biker stops to help... snap! We assured her they really favor black motorcycles as disposing of the parts in the swamp are easier than the brighter colors. Judy has the only black bike in our group.

On Wednesday, we went to the dealership and got tires, oil and everything else imaginable. Believe it or not I even purchased a pink snoring pig for my dog back home. Naples Harley-Davidson is a class act. They took really good care of us. First Class!!

As we were almost through with the service in the afternoon, another Hoka Hey rider, Rick, showed up. During the day three more came threw. Now we are sure there will be at least nine of us. Pretty far from a thousand anticipated but at least we won't be alone. The one common feeling is that if the race has any hitches, we are going to Alaska one way or the other.

There is mass speculation about our route. Our group's feeling is that we are going to ride back exactly the way we came from Phoenix. If you take a map program and go from Key

West to Homer, Alaska, and modify the route to pass through Phoenix and then Rapid City and on to Homer its 7,300 miles. The exact length of the race. Also the promoters have mentioned that we will go through Tortilla Flats (as in Phoenix) and Rabbit Ears Pass as on the way from Phoenix to Rapid City in Colorado. We will see.

Well tomorrow we are off to feed Judy to the alligators and then on to Key West. It's the first indication we will have about what is going to happen. We all have to check in at 9:00am on Friday with a reception that evening. Then a three hour rider's meeting Saturday afternoon.

I'll let everyone know as soon as new info becomes available.

E.B.

P.S.: Judy went back to the dealership this afternoon and had her highway pegs moved to the top of her engine guard to have her feet higher from the roadway. Probably just a comfort thing.

## DAY SIX Monday, June 14/10

INTERNET OUT TODAY

*(the below portion was emailed early Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>)*

Sorry about not sending last night. Internet was out so using phone. Slow going for novice. Arrived in Perry, FL. Lunch in Apalachicola at the Boss Oyster. Great day. Hot really hot. Everyone doing well. Heading for Naples tomorrow. High spirits. Can't wait to get started.

E. B.

## DAY FIVE Sunday, June 13/10

Well we made another day safely. We are now in Pensacola, Florida.

We will be in Florida for about a week. Judy and I are celebrating as Florida does not have a helmet law. I had promised to wear a helmet anyway but in this heat it's overbearing. I'm back to wearing it if required or if it is raining or snowing (little chance).

We departed New Orleans around eight o'clock this morning and rode to Mobile on US 90 along the coast. Right on the Gulf of Mexico. This is a not to be missed ride as it goes right through the heart of where Katrina came on shore. Today the roads and land along the route are beginning to look almost normal again; however, nothing like it was before the storm. This was the place to have a summer home back in my youth. Gulfport, Biloxi. These were the places to be. All of the old large white

wooden mansions along the beach are gone now. They are being replaced by contemporary new construction which is nice enough but nothing like the old homes. Just a slice of the old South gone away. And now there is oil cleanup activity all over the place. We looked at the ocean and could not see any visible oil contamination. These poor people can not seem to win for losing. The number of businesses along the shore which are no longer there is staggering. The others in our group didn't have a perspective of the loss as they never saw the "before" condition. It's quite a loss.

But, on a lighter note, we did make our first stop for a daily grease injection for breakfast. Nope, it was not a Cracker Barrel but the next best thing, a Waffle House. Everyone had a great southern breakfast but I didn't notice any grits being consumed. Well we will work on that.



When we arrived in Mobile we went to the Battleship Alabama and spent the afternoon touring the ship and other aircraft and equipment in the museum. Quite an experience. Makes you wonder how we won the Second World War. The battleship is basic stuff. No technology by today's standards. And it was hot. Even though they had air conditioners running throughout the ship, it was still really hot throughout much of the ship. When this thing was in use, there were no air conditioners and it was in the South Pacific. I can't imagine how the crew lived inside this thing. No portholes, windows or anything. Just basic gray metal.

When we arrived in Pensacola, Robert Hobbs, my brother-in-law met us. He rode down from his home in Nashville to spend a day on the road with us. He is riding from Pensacola to Perry with us tomorrow and then riding back home. Robert and I have ridden a lot of miles together and it will be good to be with him.

We all set out to dinner at the Irish pub across the street to find it absolutely packed so we went on to an Outback Steak house. Gib has two friends in Pensacola who are from Phoenix and just moved there. They joined us for dinner. We held down the entire bar so long that the place was deserted before we got around to eating.

All in all a good day. Surprise! It was ---- hot and dry. My suntan has a suntan. I must be about medium well at this point. We are all dreaming about getting to some northern latitudes where the weather might be wetter and cooler. Never wanted that before but this heat is ridiculous. But, we are moving on and it's a great time so far.

All the bikes are doing well. No issues there.

I received an email from Ray Croghan this morning saying his crowd, who has just arrived in Alaska via a cruise from Washington State, was starting to ride back to the States from Anchorage. So far I know of three different biker groups, other than us, who will be on this route within the next month. It would be fun if we intersect.

We will see.

E. B.

## DAY FOUR Saturday, June 12/10

Hi gals and guys,

Today we rode from Beaumont, Texas to New Orleans.

We had a great ride in hot and clear weather. Well as great a ride as you can have on three hundred miles of interstate.

When I went out about 5:30am to load up, as usual there was Judy loading her bike. I completely loaded my bike, checked various things, cleaned the windshield, reset the GPS and got ready to leave. All the while, Judy quietly worked on her bike. After I completed what I was doing and had taken a seat on a bench to await our departure, Judy came over and asked “should your rear tire be flat like that”? Well so much for the big time Harley guy who never misses anything.

Obviously the tire should not be flat; even I caught on to that. Well it was dark and I couldn't see the tire. That's my excuse and I'm sticking with it. Don't ask how she could see it. Maybe she has younger eyes than mine. I don't know. I got out my tire gauge and the air pressure in the tire would not even make the gauge move. So I got out my air pump and plugged it into the lighter and, after some time, had the tire inflated to 40 PSI. Great! As I was putting away the air pump, Judy asked exactly where I kept my microwave. Well I do have a lot of stuff. But alas, no microwave. And I don't want to hear anything about having to have help to tell me my tire was flat. I would have known it immediately upon riding out of the parking lot. I was just pacing myself...

When Travis came out, we rolled the bike and determined that the tire probably would not make it to Naples, where we planned to replace our tires. Especially considering the large nail sticking out of the tire. Bummer! However!! There was a Harley dealer; Cowboy Harley-Davidson of Beaumont directly across the street, so off we go over there.

When we arrive, the dealership's HOG chapter is gathering for a Saturday ride. They tell us the Service Department opens at 9am. Its then 7:00. Well two hours here is

not nearly as bad as half a day in the middle of nowhere so we count our blessings and settle in to wait. I'd rather be lucky than good any day.



Looking forward to getting the tire fixed quickly, we asked the HOG members if the Service Department was generally user friendly. They said it was --- after 9 o'clock. When the Service Department opened at 9, the Service Manager came out and asked how he could help us. When he learns of the problem he arranges a Service Technician to fix the tire PDQ and it's over in about an hour. Really good service. While I

am waiting, I visited with the General Manager of the dealership, who I had met in the past. Good dealership and good people.

We were going to ride through the Mississippi delta on our way to New Orleans but considering our delay, everyone chose to ride interstate 10 east and arrive in New Orleans in time for some sight seeing. Travis, Gib nor Judy had ever been to New Orleans and all seemed quite impressed. We stayed right in the French Quarter and went out to a fine dinner of Creole cooking. Really good. I tell you, New Orleans has not heard there is a recession going on. It was Saturday night and the place was packed. When we were walking back to the hotel after dinner, Judy said she had never seen a swamp before or eaten catfish. She was impressed with both.

We all discussed going over to Café Dumonte along the river and having a pastry they make with enough powdered sugar on it to kill both Travis and me, neither of who should be eating much sugar. We wisely declined. I told Judy that the swamp was nothing. She was going to ride through Alligator Alley between Naples and Miami on the way to Key West and the Alligators would be lying all along the road. She was viably impressed and asked if there were any cause for concern with such critters so close. We told her we really did not think so as they only chase Harley chicks and never the guys. We thought they showed very good judgment! Obviously she knew we were teasing and is anxious to see the gators.

Today, for the first time, we saw real rain. A gully washer. It came about one minute after we pulled in the Maison Dupry's underground parking lot and lasted until we had a drink in the bar. We were lucky. The rain really moderated the hot muggy day. It became a hot wet day. Again steam coming off of the pavement.

All in all it was a good day. More tomorrow.

E. B.

## DAY THREE Friday, June 11/10

Ah! it's Friday, day three.

I figure we will take about thirty total days. From June 9<sup>th</sup> through July 10<sup>th</sup> or so. At that rate, we have now done three days or 10% of the trip. And we have covered about 1,350 miles. Only about 13,000 to go. Let's see. At about 500 miles a day and 27 days left, that's about a distance of 11,500 miles. Hum. Not 13,000 plus. Guess we will have to stay up late some where along the line.

Today we soiled Texas. The 500 miles of dark matter stretching diagonally from West to East across the state is probably the carbon residue from the jet blast during our low level pass. Of course, it could be other substances, and the way we were riding might give rise to such speculation.

I love Texas. It's a great state with big and I mean BIG speed limits and great roads. We probably averaged 80 to 85 the first half of today in West Texas. We were riding as well as I have ever ridden in a foursome in formation. No issues. The roads simply disappear into the heat waves. Long and straight!

We slowed down a little this afternoon as we were going through some populated areas but still kept the speed up. No moss growing on these rolling stones.

I'm impressed at how in West Texas the locals really respect bikers. When they see a group coming up behind them, they immediately pull off of the road and let the bikes go past. Really accommodating. Now I don't actually know if they are being courteous or if they fear that if they don't pull over, they might have an urgent need for a proctologist but, in either case, the riding is great and you can ride as hard as you like. The police seem to allow it as long as everything is safe. They actually wave as you flash by.

Today was cooler than yesterday. The high today was barely over 100! Not anything like the 109 yesterday. AND--- we got rained on. It was a brief shower but presented something I had not seen before. The little bit of water which was making it to the road surface was turning into steam!

Tonight we are in Beaumont at the Hampton Inn south of town. An old standby. And why not, there is a Cracker Barrel right around the corner. Unfortunately, when our group of four voted for a dining location this evening, Cracker Barrel lost 12 to 1. I'm still thinking about how this can be. I feel there was definitely some hanky panky going on but have yet to prove it.

So we ate at Carino's next door. It's good for fast Italian food but busy and noisy.

When we arrived at the Hampton Inn another group of bikers were also pulling up. Four of them on a “Four Corners” ride. They started with Key West and are now going west to San Diego and then up the coast to Seattle and on to Maine and then home. This group rightly considered themselves big time bikers and I am sure they are. When we told them what we were doing, they were shocked. We gave them Chester’s Harley-Davidson business cards and invited them to go by the store for tires, oil changes and to report they saw us alive along the way. So if anyone ever comes looking for us they will at least have a waypoint.

We had dinner with the other crowd. As I said, they were already impressed but at dinner one of them asked which of us was Judy riding with? When they computed that she is on her own big time touring bike; a significant hush came over their table.

Life’s good going east.

Tomorrow it’s on to New Orleans.

E. B.

## DAY TWO Thursday, June 10/10

Hi gang, well we are now at the end of our second day and have arrived safely and happy in Snyder, Texas. After some careful calculation, we have now completed about seven percent of our trip (2 days out of 30). Wow! Are we moving right along or what?

Today was hot and sunny. Hot takes on an entirely new meaning in this deal. About 115 degrees this afternoon reading over 120 on the gauge on my bike. Surely this is due to the blacktop heat retention. Needless to say, we stopped a lot and purchased a lot of ice water. Some to drink. Some to pour over our heads. Ah, good! Tomorrow promises to be cooler. The high is forecast to be only 109!

Now I have heard a lot about US 50 in Nevada, from Utah to Reno, being “America’s loneliest road”. Well that is only if you have not ridden US 380 from just south of Socorro, New Mexico to West Texas. This is a long, long, straight lonely road. Even the few cows along the way (no fences) run off wide eyed like they have never seen a white man before. Maybe they haven’t. West Texas has the reputation of having fairly lonely, long, straight roads. Let me tell you, when we got to Texas, we thought we were downtown somewhere. There is a lot of humanity around West Texas unlike this area of New Mexico. Speaking of downtown, on the summit of one of the hogbacks we crossed over in New Mexico, I could swear I could see a big city on the horizon to the north east. Someone said it was Cleveland. I would normally know that was just a joke, but out here, could be!

We stopped for lunch at a place called Margaritas in Roswell, New Mexico which our group had been there before back in March on the same road trip to Key West. It's a Chinese, Mexican, American buffet. Really good food. The second time was as good as the first. Where can you get all you can eat fried chicken, sweet and sour pork, fried shrimp (some of which looked a little oily but probably not) and a lot of strange offerings which undoubtedly had Mexican names with which I am not familiar. Looked good though, and all for seven dollars. We did a lot of research to locate Margarita's. We stopped beside a pickup truck at a red light and asked the driver where to go for lunch. He said with a shrug, why not right there, it's the best in town. We were stopped in the street in front of Margarita's.

Now Snyder is a lovely oil town. It's really a nice place with a first class, new, Holiday Inn Express. We have just returned from a delightful meal of bar food in the No Scum Cowboy Bar and Grill. A delightful place and that's its real name. We got in so I guess we were marginally above the lower standard. I don't rightly know exactly what is right above scum but that was probably us. Now today we covered about 400 miles in 12 hours. I am still trying to compute a thousand miles in 24 hours. So far, I need an extra hour or two. Like last night, we are still working on it. I'll keep you posted.

The bikes are doing good and everyone is riding well. Really the riding starts tomorrow as we plan to go to Beaumont, Texas across the middle of the state. Not too crowded but nothing like the cruise control being set for two hours we are used to so far. Today we averaged a moving speed of over sixty miles per hour. A good rate. The rest was stops which were many.

We are off to New Orleans for an overnight day after tomorrow. I am the only one on the trip who has been there. I assured everyone it is the newest, cleanest city they probably will ever visit. We are staying at the Maison Dupry, a very old hotel but with exceptional underground bike parking, right off of Bourbon Street so they are in for a shock. A good shock I am sure. They will love it and we will be there on Saturday night.

Bill Torrance---- Well??? Well???? Yes??? No???? I'll let everyone else know what this is all about when, or maybe I should say if, I get an answer. Nothing like trying to get your brother in law to do something by publicly exposing him. Just a teaser. More to come. And by the way Bill, Robert Hobbs is going to do it by coming to Pensacola! Hopefully the Hampton Inn in Beaumont tomorrow night will have internet connectivity and I'll be back with you then.

E. B.

## DAY ONE Wednesday, June 9/10

Hi gang--

I am going to write a short email each afternoon to let you know I am still alive so here goes.

We arrived in Socoro, New Mexico intact, I guess. Maybe I should take inventory. Lets see--- ears: yup, two, check --- eyes: yes again, two, check --- hair: ..... hair: ..... Damn! Must have blown off along the way.

Anyway, we are all well and riding great. Judy (for those of you who don't know, an exceptional middle age lady (my age or less) who is on her first long distance group trip, has turned out to be a strong rider and is enjoying the experience and doing well. I would like to point out to my wife that she only stops when the guys stop so a lifetime of excuses just may not be entirely true! Any one who can be thrown in with Travis, Gib and me and ride as a forth in a synchronized group riding fashion is doing ok.

Travis is in the pool and as soon as they get the pool refilled we are off to dinner. Again for those of you who may not know Travis, he is a big boy and the pool is a small pool. When we return from dinner, I'll probably clean the protein off of my windshield and go to bed. I'm still in the clean and neat profile. It won't last. Once all of my clothes are dirtier than the bike, it will probably suffer accordingly.

We rode 375 miles today, leaving at 8am and arriving around 3pm. I'm still trying to figure again how a 1,000+ mile day works. Well I am sure we will think of something.

If any one doesn't want to get these daily reports, just reply and let me know. I'll continue to send them when I have connectivity in the evenings which should be most of the time. You don't necessarily have to respond but if you want to laugh and ridicule, feel free. If you want everyone to know exactly how jealous you really are be sure to click on "reply to all." And besides, it will only last a month.

It's going to be a world class adventure. I can already sense that for sure.

E. B