

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

GETTING ANXIOUS!

I'm anxious to get on the road! I've been planning this trip for so long, it's hard to believe the day has nearly arrived.

Tomorrow I will depart early—about 4:30 a.m.—to beat the horrendous L.A. freeway traffic the first morning after a holiday. Interstate 15 to Las Vegas is always a zoo, but if I can make it to the "High Desert" by daybreak, I should be O.K.

The past two days have been spent checking my gear and trying to get everything into the limited space available. The plan was to travel light, but the pile has been getting larger and now I am near max capacity. It would be hard to get another pair of socks into the water-proof duffle I will carry my clothing in. I don't usually take my laptop computer on motorcycle trips and find that it takes up more space than I had thought.



Last night I weighed everything and found the total to be just under 90 lbs. That's not too bad I guess—about like riding 2-up without any luggage.

I checked the air in the tires, 40 psi, then adjusted the suspension and preload for the additional weight. On the way to top off the fuel tank, I found a dark road and checked the headlight alignment. It wasn't as far off as I had feared and only required a couple of turns on the adjustment screw. Unlike many Japanese bikes which have a handy headlight adjustment on the instrument panel, I must get off my bike and reach behind the handle bars with an allen wrench.

I got up early this morning so I can go to bed early tonight. It was a little cooler than it has been—57 degrees F. There is definitely a touch of Fall in the air. I may need a sweater in the morning until I reach the dessert. It is only 487 miles to Cedar City, UT, where I will meet my friend Vic. That should be an easy day.

Vic left Northern California this morning and will overnight in Ely, NV.



He wants to check out a motorcycle shop there and then plans to take a look at the Great Basin National Park.

Just a few more chores and I'll be ready...

Posted: Monday - September 1, 2003 at 09:16 AM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 1 – FREEWAYS & INTERSTATES

This was a travel day. Weather was perfect (at least for me), traffic was light, and the bike is running good.

I departed Camarillo this morning at 5:00 a.m—clear skies and 57 degrees. Traffic was light and I made Barstow in record time. Gas and coffee there, then non-stop to Mesquite, Nevada for more gas. Even with a brief detour to check out Red Cliffs State Park, I arrived in Cedar City at 2:30 p.m. 502 miles in eight hours including stops. Not bad. The hottest it got was 100 degrees in Las Vegas, but my Savanna jacket proved it worth again. The more I wear that jacket, the more I like it. With all the vents open, I was never uncomfortable.

This was not a scenic day—just 500 miles of Interstate. Tomorrow the fun begins.



Vic was waiting for me at in Cedar City with horror stories of his trip across Northern Nevada—thunder storms, hail, lighting and strong winds. Not a nice day! Hopefully that will not be soon repeated.



We discovered there are Mexicans in Utah. Cedar City must have ten Mexican restaurants. I think we may try one tonight.

Mileage today: 502

Posted: Tuesday - September 2, 2003 at 03:57 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 2 – CAPITOL REEF

Today was what motorcycling is all about – perfect weather, good roads, spectacular scenery.

We woke up early this morning in Cedar City to clear skies and a cool 60 degrees. The "continental breakfast" our motel had advertised was the pits, so we passed on that and hit the road about 7:30 a.m. Highway 14 southeast toward Cedar Breaks National Monument began an immediate climb to 9,896' Midway Summit where the temperature had dropped into the low 40's. My heated handlebar grips really felt good.

Descending along Duck Creek, it began to warm a bit and the sun felt good. Breakfast in Hatch, UT really hit the spot. Everyone in Utah is exceptionally friendly.

We didn't spend much time in Bryce Canyon but continued along Highway 12 through Escalante then to Torrey, UT. The roads and scenery were outstanding, the traffic was light and the clouds added a spectacular backdrop to the red cliffs.



We checked into a nice motel in Torrey, dropped our some of our load, then took a ride through the western half of Capital Reef National Park. What a fantastic ride! This is as good a motorcycling gets!

At each scenic turnout, we kept running into a French couple on a rented Harley who were absolutely amazed at the beauty and vastness of the American West. I didn't think the French liked us anymore, but this couple seemed to be an exception.



Tomorrow we will continue through Capital Reef National Park, then check out Arches National Park in Eastern Utah. The weather report is good and we are looking forward to another good day of riding.

Mileage today: 221; Total mileage: 723

Posted: Wednesday - September 3, 2003 at 07:55 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 3 – ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

Torrey, Hanksville, Arches, Moab and Grand Junction: Another excellent day. Great scenery, good roads, perfect weather and light traffic. What more can one ask for?

After a good breakfast with three Harley guys we met the night before, we departed tree-lined Torrey, Utah at 8:00 a.m. It was a comfortable 59 degrees. As we retraced our route through Capital Reef, the temp began to increase until it topped 100 degrees near Arches National Park.

The stark contrast of red cliffs and green cottonwood trees soon gave way to colorless mud mountains of the Luna Plateau. I decided against buying retirement property in Hanksville. Green River didn't impress me much either.



Arches National Park was something else however. Of all the national parks I have visited, I would rank Arches among the top two or three. I can't describe the magnificence of the red limestone formations and the precariously balanced rocks. Arches is a "must see" for anyone traveling through the American West.

We had an early dinner in Moab, then followed Highway 128 northeast along the Colorado River to Interstate 70. Highway 128 is one of the finest roads I have ever ridden a bike on. Not only is the scenery breathtaking but the road is what every biker dreams of – thanks Fred!



We are spending tonight at the 3-star (in your dreams) Value Lodge Motel in Grand Junction, CO. Fortunately we will only be here a short time. We plan to get an early start in the morning and try to make it to Grand Lake, CO near the entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park.

While gassing up in Moab, fuel splashed onto the inside of Vic's windshield, completely ruining it. Somewhere along the way, we will try to find a new windshield. Otherwise, both bikes are running good.

Mileage today: 305; Total mileage: 1028

Posted: Thursday - September 4, 2003 at 08:10 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 4 – ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

Western Colorado is a mixed bag; some parts are absolutely beautiful, other parts you can keep.

Today we took I-70 from Grand Junction to Rifle, then turned north on Highway 12 to Meeker and Craig. Something I noticed right away is that in Colorado there is apparently no speed limit for trucks. It is not uncommon to be passed by 18-wheelers traveling in excess of 85 m.p.h. It's downright scary!

The road from Rifle to Craig is a nice road. It is in good repair, has some nice curves and has very little traffic. At Craig, we turned eastbound on Highway 40 where the traffic more than doubled. Hayden is a nice little town with a lot of atmosphere while Steamboat Springs seems to be competing with Aspen to see which can attract more pretentious yuppies.

Rocky Mountain National Park has always been one of my favorite spots. Simply driving through the park doesn't do it justice, but since we have so far to go, that is what we did. It is only 40 miles from Grand Lake to Estes Park and we did the whole thing in about two hours. Not much time to experience such splendor.



The temperature in Grand Lake was 85 degrees. Shortly after entering the park, Highway 34 begins a climb to 12,183' where the temperature was a chilly 46 degrees. Crossing the summit, a passing shower cooled things down even more, but by the time we reached Estes Park, the temperature was back into the mid 80's.

One of the worst experiences of the trip so far was our ride from Estes Park to Loveland. There is a 30-mile no passing zone where the worst drivers in Colorado go to practice their stupidity. Anyone visiting Colorado should avoid this road at all costs!

We had a good Italian dinner in Estes Park then decided to continue to Loveland before finding a place to stay. It was a good thing we ate when we did because every motel in Loveland was full due to multiple events this weekend. We continued on to Greeley, where we found a convenient and clean Super-8 motel which we grabbed without even asking the price. Fortunately it was reasonable.

Tomorrow we head unto the hinterlands of Eastern Colorado and Western Nebraska with a goal of reaching Lincoln by nightfall.

Mileage today: 398; Total mileage: 1,426

Posted: Friday - September 5, 2003 at 08:47 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 5 – EASTERN COLORADO & NEBRASKA

Another good day. We left the mountains behind and headed into the true heartland of American.

Departure from Grand Junction was delayed somewhat by the excellent breakfast included with our room. Super-8 motels have really come up in the world. No one could ask for a better place to stay.

It was another beautiful day with a temperature of 58 degrees at 8:00 a.m. when we finally got under way. We picked up Highway 34 just outside our motel and followed it for the rest of the day – first through Eastern Colorado, then 3/4 of the way across Nebraska. Temperatures peaked in the high 80's with nothing more than scattered clouds.

If you like the smell of cows, you will love Eastern Colorado. I had decided to make some more derogatory comments about the State of Colorado until we stopped for coffee in Wray, just west of the Nebraska border. Wray is a nice little town with a main street more fitting of Maybury RFD. The two young girls running the "Coffee & Bagel Salon" were exceptionally friendly and happy to explain how Wray produced more corn than any other county in Colorado – or something like that. We left Wray feeling that all was well with the world.



The further east we rode, the more attractive the landscape became. Brown pastures and feed lots gave way to irrigated fields of corn. Unfortunately many of the small towns we passed are in decline.

Our original intent was to overnight in Lincoln, but after noticing the many red University of Nebraska flags flying in every town we passed, we realized this was Saturday and there was probably a football game in Lincoln. This confirmed, we realized that we would never find a place to stay there. We therefore decided to stop for the night in the small town of Sutton, about 75 miles west of Lincoln.

This proved to be a good plan. The "Mom & Pop" motel we found was excellent. Everyone we have met have gone out of their way to be helpful and friendly. We had dinner at the American Legion Hall and that was excellent also. Tomorrow we will leave Nebraska with a favorable impression. Our goal tomorrow is to make Burlington, Iowa.

Mileage today: 394; Total mileage: 1,820

Posted: Saturday - September 6, 2003 at 08:12 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 6 – IOWA

This was a hard day – lots of miles on a rough, straight road with lots of traffic and not much interesting to see.

We got an early start this morning after a good nights sleep in Sutton, Nebraska. Good weather seems to be following us across the country, however several farmers we talked with complained about a lack of rain. If it wasn't too dry, it would probably be too wet – or the bugs would be eating the corn. Two of my uncles were farmers and I know the drill.

We programed our Garmin V's for the fastest route to Exit 426 on Interstate 80 northeast of Lincoln. It was 56 degrees at 7:30 a.m. as we pulled out of the motel and headed east on Highway 6. It took only about a mile for me to realize that I needed my jacket liner. Not wanting to stop however, I just hunkered down and waited for the sun to do it's work.

We joined I-80 about 30 miles to the west of Lincoln and fell in line with fast moving traffic. It took a little over an hour to reach Exit 426. We worked our way through several twists and turns until we came to an ancient toll bridge across the Missouri River. From the looks of this bridge, it is obvious that little of the toll revenue is used for maintenance. I was glad our bikes didn't weigh much.

On the east side of the river, we picked up Highway 34 which we will follow across the entire state. Iowa grows beautiful corn but their roads are not as good as those in Nebraska. We stopped a couple of times to gas and once just for a rest at the tree shaded town square in Mt. Pleasant.



The original plan was to overnight in Burlington, IA, but at the last minute we decided to press on to Monmouth, Illinois where we found another Super-8 motel right on our route.

I'm tired tonight. We didn't have a decent meal all day and I am beginning to wonder if I can keep up the pace we have maintained for the past six days. I am going to need a rest day soon.

Tomorrow we will shoot for Muncie, Indiana, then the Air Force Museum in Dayton on Tuesday.

Mileage today: 429; Total mileage: 2,249

Posted: Sunday - September 7, 2003 at 09:02 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 7 - ILLINOIS

Another day on the road and I've seen enough corn and soy beans to last a lifetime. I'm also beginning to feel a bit claustrophobic being so far from a sea coast. I'm impressed with how friendly the people are in the "heartland." Today at a rest stop, a lady just walked up to us and said that she hoped we were having a nice day. I hope I didn't look too surprised.

We departed Monmouth, Illinois at 7:15 a.m. under a high overcast, 65 degrees and 100% humidity. The temperature never rose above 80 degrees the whole day but the humidity made it seem hotter than it was.

We made a fast run to Bloomington, Illinois via Interstate 74, then picked up Highway 9 eastbound to Indiana, where it turned into Highway 28.



Traveling through the "heartland," one can't help but compare one state to another. Illinois has the best looking farms of any of the adjoining states. The fields are perfectly kept and the farm houses seem to be more up scale. On the same scale, Iowa and Indiana are about equal with Nebraska a distant third. Many of the towns in Nebraska are in decline and a lot of the farms look the same way. The farms in Eastern Colorado aren't even in the running.



Our tentative schedule called for reaching Dayton by nightfall, but after such a hard day yesterday, we decided to go only as far as Muncie, Indiana. We found a nice 2 3/4 star motel and settled in for the night. It is only 96 miles to the Air Force Museum in Dayton, which we will do in the morning after breakfast.

A few days ago, Vic had an accident while fueling his bike and splashed warm gasoline all over the inside of his windshield. For some reason, this turned the plexiglas almost totally opaque and no amount of cleaning seemed to help. Vic has arranged to have a new windshield installed at Tri-Cities BMW in Cincinnati on Wednesday, so we will go down there tomorrow after we are finished at the Air Force Museum. It is only 50 miles from Dayton to Cincinnati, so tomorrow should be an easy day. We have decided to make Wednesday a rest day. I'm looking forward to that.

Mileage today: 329; Total mileage: 2,578

Posted: Monday - September 8, 2003 at 07:35 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 8 – AIR FORCE MUSEUM

The trip from Muncie to the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio was only 96 miles but involved a lot of twists and turns. Our GPS made the trip a piece of cake however. The Air Force Museum is a "must see" for anyone interesting in military aviation.

We left Muncie at 7:15 a.m. this morning, wanting plenty time to spend at the museum. Visibility was reduced to about three miles in haze and fog. It was a fairly warm 62 degrees and we had an easy trip across eastern Indiana and into Dayton's maze of freeways. Lots of highway construction complicated matters, but nothing that two Southern California freeway veterans couldn't handle.

It had been over fifteen years since I had been to the Air Force Museum. It was excellent then and even better today.



Two additional hangars have been added, one large enough to house over a dozen of the largest aircraft the Air Force has ever flown, all under one roof – including a B-52, a B-36, a C-133, a C-124 and a B-29.

Another addition that I found impressive was a memorial park where various Air Force veterans organizations have placed memorials to their fallen comrades.



We spent five hours walking through the exhibits. In my opinion this museum is every bit as good as the Smithsonian Aerospace Museum in Washington, D.C. A bus ride to the other side of the airport would have allowed us to view four presidential airplanes and the XB-70. But since we had both seen these airplanes before, we called it quits about 4 p.m.

We wanted to check in with the shop that would be installing Vic's new windshield tomorrow, so we jumped on I-75 for the 50 mile trip to Cincinnati. When we arrived at the BMW shop, we discovered they didn't have the windshield and didn't know for sure when they would. Someone finally admitted that the windshield had not been ordered until yesterday. What incompetence!

After a few telephone calls, we obtained assurance from the BMW dealer in Burlington, Vermont that they would special order a windshield and have it by Friday. We will be there on Monday, so hopefully Vic will soon be able to see where he is going. It is almost time for a minor service on my bike, so I think I will have that done also.

Tonight we are staying in the nicest hotel we have stayed in on our trip. We also joined a frequent traveler club that will give us every 3rd night free.

We had a good dinner, did our laundry and surfed the Internet with the free high speed connection the hotel provides. Tomorrow we plan to have a leisurely breakfast, read the newspaper – something I have missed since leaving home – then make a dash up I-71 to Cleveland. We will stay there tomorrow night and visit the Rock 'n Roll Museum the following day.

Mileage today: 143; Total mileage: 2,721

Posted: Tuesday - September 9, 2003 at 09:19 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 9 – OHIO

This was a travel day from Cincinnati—where we had wasted an entire day—to Cleveland, where we may partially waste another.

I slept in this morning and caught up on some much needed rest. Vic was up as usual at the crack of dawn and had finished breakfast and his morning walk before I even removed my ear plugs. We did laundry last night in the spotlessly clean washer and dryer at our motel and today it feels good to have a choice of clean clothes to wear.

We gassed up and hit the Interstate a little after 11:00 a.m. The weather was good—clear skies and temperatures in the low 80's. We made the 243 miles to Cleveland in 4 1/2 hours, including a rest stop at a Windy's near Columbus. There was a lot of road construction and we saw more LEO's today than in all of our previously days combined. We have made a habit of not running more than 10 m.p.h. over the posted speed limit, so we didn't have any problems.

I had been looking forward to showing Vic Cleveland's renovated lake front, but when we got there we found the whole area cordoned off for the "Gravity Games," a huge bicycle and skate boarding competition. Thousands of teenagers with spiked hair and body piercings were milling about and we couldn't even see the lake.

Tomorrow we will visit the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, then head east along Lake Erie toward Buffalo and Niagara Falls.



Mileage today: 243; Total mileage: 2,964

Posted: Wednesday - September 10, 2003 at 07:00 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 10 – CLEVELAND

Our day in Cleveland turned out better than I had feared. Apparently the skate boarding crowd doesn't come out before noon, so we had the whole morning to ourselves.

After checking out of our hotel this morning, we stowed our gear in the hotel ball room and walked down to the lake front. The William G. Mather, the iron ore ship we wanted to tour, was only open on the weekend, so we settled for a WW II submarine moored nearby at the Cleveland Coast Guard Station. We had the boat to ourselves and were able to explore at our leisure. I had never been aboard a submarine before and found this very interesting.



Next was the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Cleveland was the site of the first rock concert in March 1952. I thought the \$14 admission was a bit high but the museum was outstanding. There were six floors of exhibits, all of which were well presented. Every exhibit had the appropriate music playing in the background and numerous theaters offered videos of notable concerts.



For those of us who witnessed the birth of Rock & Roll and have followed its evolution throughout the years, this museum brings back lots of memories. We could have easily spent all day there, but we called it quits about 2:30 p.m. and headed east toward New York.

We took the Interstate as far as Erie, PA, then transitioned to Route 5 which runs along the southeastern shore of Lake Erie. This was a good ride through forests, farm land and vineyards.

We reached Dunkirk, New York about 5:30 p.m. We found a old but very well maintained lakeside resort run by an Indian family (from India). After unpacking our bikes, we walked about two miles to a recommended restaurant for an excellent meal. I had the best poached salmon I have ever had and Vic even ate "real" food for a change.

There is no telephone in our room, so posting this entry will have to wait until tomorrow. I'm not sure how far we will get, but it will be somewhere east of Buffalo. We have to be in Burlington, VT by Sunday night. We both have appointments Monday morning at the BMW dealer for maintenance on our bikes. Vic will get an oil change and new windshield; I will get a minor service and two new tires. Both bikes are running good and this should get us through the rest of the trip.

Mileage today: 153; Total mileage: 3,117

Posted: Thursday - September 11, 2003 at 07:25 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 11 – NIAGARA FALLS

The 2 1/2 star motel we stayed in last night was so noisy, I was up and ready to ride by 5:00 a.m. One thing led to another however and we didn't actually get on the road until 7:00 a.m. Today was Niagara Falls and the weather gods smiled on us again.

Our motel in Dunkirk, NY was about 100 feet from a major highway and about 100 yards from a major railroad. Between the constant stream of trucks and a train every 30 minutes, I didn't get a whole lot of rest. We are at a much nicer place tonight and I am looking forward to a good nights sleep.

We saw a little bit of New York yesterday and a lot more today. New York is a beautiful state. I think I could live here—at least until the onset of winter.



Our short ride to Niagara Falls was quite an event. I don't think we would have made it without our GPS however. The weather was perfect – clear skies and about 75 degrees. We spent four hours walking from one view spot to another marveling at one of the natural wonders of the world.



The best view of the falls is from Canada, so we walked across the Rainbow Bridge and spent a while on the west side of the river. I was somewhat apprehensive about being hassled by US Customs on the way back due to the increased security, but everyone was courteous and very professional. The Canadians charged 50 cents however to leave Canada. Strange!

Leaving the falls, we headed north to Fort Niagara, then along the southern shore of Lake Ontario to Rochester. Traffic through the city was awful, but we held our course and made it to the Great Lakes port of Oswego, NY just before sunset.

This part of New York is a major fruit growing region and I have never seen so many beautiful peaches and apples.



This afternoon we stopped at a small fruit stand and tried to buy two apples. The young lady in charge said that unless we bought a whole basket, the price would be 50 cents each. I wanted to just pick a couple from one of the orchards along the highway but Vic wouldn't let me. He paid for the apples which we had for desert tonight. They were excellent.

Tomorrow we will continue eastward with no particular destination. Our only requirement is to reach Burlington by Sunday night. Rain is forecast but we are pretty well equipped.

Mileage today: 237; Total mileage: 3,354

Posted: Friday - September 12, 2003 at 06:27 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 12 – ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS

The Adirondack Mountains extend from just north of Albany, New York to the Canadian border. This is beautiful country. Many people do not credit New York as having beauty like this.

We departed Oswego, NY this morning about about 9:00 a.m. after a good breakfast at a local eatery. We are living on borrowed time as far as the weather goes. The forecast was for rain today, but we never saw a drop.

We had a scenic ride along Highway 3 north to Watertown, NY, then turned east toward the Adirondack Mountains. Mountains don't have the same meaning in the East as they do in the West. Many people east of Mississippi have never seen a real mountain. Here, any change in elevation over 1,000' is consider a "mountain." Whatever they are called, this is beautiful country.



The 1980 winter olympics were held in Lake Placid and Saranac Lake, New York. I would love to see this area in the winter. Right now, the trees are just starting to change color but the days are still warm enough for summer clothes.

This is motorcycle country. We have seen more bikes today than all our previous days combined—and most have been Harleys. It is interesting to note that hardly anyone back here wears a helmet. It would be interesting to compare the number of organ donors to the number in other parts of the country.

We found a nice motel in Lake Placid within walking distance of the main street. We had an excellent dinner at an overpriced restaurant, then strolled around and looked at looked at motorcycles.



We are only 50 miles from Burlington, VT where we are scheduled to have our bikes serviced on Monday. Since we have some spare time to kill, we may explore some of the historical sites around Lake Champlain tomorrow.

Mileage today: 189; Total Mileage: 3,543.

Posted: Saturday - September 13, 2003 at 05:28 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 13 – LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Today we explored the area around Lake Champlain and visited Fort Ticonderoga.

We left Lake Placid about 9:00 a.m. after a real New York bagel breakfast. Tomorrow we are scheduled at the BMW dealer in Burlington, VT at 8:30 a.m. Burlington is only 50 miles away, so today was basically a free day.

The Adirondack Mountains between Lake Placid and the border with Vermont are the most beautiful part of New York State and we had no problem finding small out of the way roads to explore. We rode south along the western shore of Lake Champlain to Fort Ticonderoga, where we refreshed our memory of American history. The history of this area is incredibly interesting.



We finally got our bikes wet. While at the Fort today, a shower drenched everything; but then the sun came out and everything just steamed. I'm surprised at the heat and humidity this time of the year.

We crossed Lake Champlain into Vermont via the Crown Point bridge and made our way through moderate to heavy traffic north to Burlington. We found the BMW dealer so we wouldn't have to hunt for it tomorrow, then found a clean and quiet (3-star) motel in the Township of Essex Junction.

Our bikes were very dirty, and since having your motorcycle serviced is a lot like going to the doctor, we spent a couple of hours this evening cleaning them up. They look so good, it is a shame to get them dirty again.

I'm not sure how long the maintenance will take tomorrow, so it's hard to tell how far east we will get before dark. We will just play it by ear. The White Mountains of New Hampshire are next on our list.

Mileage today: 139; Total mileage: 3,682

Posted: Sunday - September 14, 2003 at 04:57 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 14 – VERMONT

We had our bikes serviced today in Burlington. Vic and I definitely helped the state economy. Hopefully we can finish the trip without spending any more on maintenance.

We had our bikes at the shop by 8:30 a.m. today and were pleased that everything we had asked for was there and ready for us. In addition to a minor service, I had both tires replaced. Just as they were finishing up installing Vic's new windshield, the mechanic noticed a metal rod sticking out of the side of his rear tire. It looked like a piece of welding rod about 3 inches long. I don't see how something like that could have penetrated that tire the way it did. In any case, Vic choose to replace the tire – probably a good idea, considering the miles ahead of us.



We were done and ready to ride at 12:45 p.m. We took I-89 to Montpelier, Vermont, then Route 2 to Lancaster, New Hampshire. We had a beautiful ride through Eastern Vermont. Every few miles there was a small village right out of a Robert Frost poem. The maple trees are beginning to turn and in another month, the whole country side should be ablaze in color.



We found a clean but over priced motel on main street right next to the post office and two blocks from the local laundromat. We were running out of clean clothes so we did our laundry, then had a fairly good dinner at the only restaurant in town.

Looking at our maps tonight, we realized we are falling behind schedule. We are going to have to pick up the pace if we want to get home before the first snow. We will make Bar Harbor tomorrow and plan to take the ferry to N.S. on Wednesday.

Mileage today: 111; Total mileage: 3,793

Posted: Monday - September 15, 2003 at 06:57 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 15 - ATLANTIC OCEAN

Today our weather luck ran out. We were awakened during the night to the sound of pounding rain, which never stopped for the rest of the day. This was a good test of our rain gear, some of which worked and some of which didn't.

Our motel in Lancaster, New Hampshire was a major rip-off and I was glad to get out there. The "grand continental breakfast" we had been promised turned out to be watered down orange juice, coffee and day-old donuts. We departed at 7:30 a.m. in moderate rain and rode to Hanover where we had a real breakfast.

After riding for a couple of hours with the temperature in the low 60's, I became totally cold soaked and had to put on my Gerbing electric jacket. My BMW cover pants worked well and so did the water proof liner for my Savanna jacket. My boots however proved to be less waterproof than advertised and my BMW waterproof gloves were totally worthless.

Vic fared somewhat better. The only problem he experienced was with his First Gear cover pants. They were nearly useless and his gloves didn't work any better than mine. His First Gear jacket worked very well however.

We needed to make up some time so we kept on the road, stopping only for fuel and to use the rest room. The weather was so poor that sightseeing was out of the question. As a result, we reached Bar Harbor about 3:00 p.m. There was a lot around here we would have liked to have explored, but visibility was less than 1/2 mile in rain and fog. We were also wet and cold.

We stopped at the ferry terminal to make reservations our trip to Nova Scotia in the morning and found the CAT was about to load for its 4:00 p.m. crossing. We decided to press on to N.S. today and hopefully get out of this lousy weather. We quickly bought out tickets and made reservations for a place to stay upon reaching Yarmouth.

There was a special place on the CAT for motorcycles with tie-down rings in the floor. Tie-downs were also provided. We secured our bikes, then went upstairs to the large and comfortable seating area.

As we sit in the grand salon, all we can see are the waves rushing by. Visibility is nil and the sensation reminds me of flying through clouds. The CAT is very quiet and smooth. Standing on the squared off stern, one can get a real sense of how fast we are moving. Once up to speed, there are two huge "rooster tails" extending several hundred feet out behind the ship. This thing really moves!

I'm not sure what our schedule will be tomorrow. A lot depends on the weather. We would like to spend tomorrow night in Halifax.

Mileage today: 223; Total mileage; 4,016

Posted: Tuesday - September 16, 2003 at 06:58 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)



Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 16 – LIGHTHOUSE ROUTE

Nova Scotia is divided into seven tour routes based on points of interest within each section. The Lighthouse Route extends along the south east coast from Yarmouth to Halifax, a distance of a little over 200 miles. This is one of the most scenic areas of Nova Scotia.

The CAT from Bar Harbor arrived in Yarmouth at 8:30 p.m. Atlantic Time. Clearing Canadian customs was quick and painless and we were soon tucked into the clean and comfortable motel we had reserved before our departure.

We were up early this morning and after a trip to a local ATM, we had a good breakfast, then began following Highway 3 to the northeast toward Halifax.

Our first stop was the historic fishing village of Lunenburg. This area is a photographer's paradise. For lunch, Vic had ice cream and a can of Sprite. I had some of the best seafood chowder I have ever eaten.



Continuing northeast, we rode through one quaint sea side village after another, each with its own charm. Most of the houses in the country side are painted either white or gray, while city houses are painted in brighter colors. I am impressed with the neatness of everything in Nova Scotia.



Because I was taking so many pictures, we were falling further behind schedule and it didn't look like we would reach Halifax by nightfall. We decided to spend the night in Peggy's Cove. This picturesque fishing village is surrounded by bare granite rocks and is famous for its lighthouse. It is also the site of the 1998 Swissair DC-10 crash.



We reached Peggy's Cove just before sunset but found all the accommodations full. I took a few pictures, then we pressed on to Halifax. We were able to find a decent motel on the outskirts of the city and finished unpacking our bikes a little after 9:00 p.m. I'm glad I had that bowl of chowder earlier today because we were too tired to go anywhere to eat. Vic had another Sprite.

Tomorrow we will tour Halifax and then head north toward Cape Breton Island.

Mileage today: 271; Total mileage: 4,287

Posted: Wednesday - September 17, 2003 at 08:00 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 17 – HALIFAX

Halifax is Nova Scotia's largest city and the predominant sea port and cultural center on Canada's Atlantic coast. We spent most of today touring the city and harbor.

We were rushed last night trying to find a place to stay and as a result, settled on a not-to-pleasant (2 3/4 star) motel on the outskirts of the city. This morning dawned clear and cool and we wasted no time in getting packed and heading for town.

Halifax is a difficult city to navigate, with many dead end and one-way streets. To make things worst, our GPS V's are practically useless in Canada. Garmin sells a Canada map set but fails to mention that many of the unit's features don't work. The unit will not follow roads and is so sluggish that we were often well past an intersection before the GPS would tell us that we should have turned. As a result, we saw a lot of Halifax that was not on our itinerary.

The most predominate landmark in Halifax is the Citadel, located on high ground in the center of the city. Since the city's founding in 1749, Citadel Hill has been the site of four forts. The last, finished in 1856, was built to deter an overland assault on the city in the event of war with the United States. As expected, the Citadel provides an excellent view of the city and harbor. We spent several hours exploring this well restored landmark.



Leaving the Citadel, we were able to find a good parking spot adjacent to the harbor. Parking is at a premium in Halifax and is priced accordingly. You must initially pay for eight hours, then if you spend less than three, you get some of your money back.

Halifax has a board walk extended over a mile from the cruise ship terminal to the main business district. With a temperature of 80 degrees and a gentle breeze off the ocean, this was a perfect day to view the many ships which are part of the Halifax Maritime Museum.

A little after 2:00 p.m. we tired of sight seeing and decided to head toward Cape Breton Island. I didn't expect to make it all the way before nightfall. We were making such good time on I-102 and I-104, we decided to go for Baddeck. We stopped along the way and asked the Canadian Tourist Bureau for help in making reservations for the night. This is an excellent service unlike anything we have in the U.S.



We arrived in Baddeck at 6:30 p.m. and found our motel to be one of the best we have stayed in so far. We had a excellent dinner of fresh haddock, which unfortunately didn't agree with Vic's sensitive stomach. I personally think it was the beer and rhubarb pie, but Vic blames the fish. I'm looking forward to a good nights rest.

Tomorrow we will ride the Cabot Trail.

Mileage today: 232; Total mileage: 4,519

Posted: Thursday - September 18, 2003 at 05:46 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 18 – THE CABOT TRAIL

Today we rode the Cabot Trail—clear skies, calm winds, 82 degrees. Is this really Nova Scotia, or did we take a wrong turn somewhere?

The Cabot Trail is a 180 mile circular route around the northern part of Cape Breton Island. To avid bikers, riding the Cabot Trail is a MDBYD (must do before you die) event. IMHO (in my humble opinion) it is over rated. There are many spots much closer to home that offer better scenery and much better roads. Nova Scotia is a beautiful province and the people are among the friendliest I have ever met, but the Cabot Trail was disappointing.

We departed our motel and 9:00 a.m. after a hearty breakfast of porridge and brand muffins. There is considerable disagreement on the best direction to ride the Trail. Some bikers take two days and ride both directions. Following the recommendation of our innkeeper who had been advising bikers for the past 25 years, we decided to ride clockwise.

From a photographer's standpoint, counter clockwise would have been better for a morning departure. As it turned out, almost everything on the west coast remained in shadows until late morning.

We joined the well marked route a few miles south of our motel and bounced our way along an extremely rough road to the western coast of Cape Breton. We then turned right and followed the coast north to the Acadian village of Cheticamp. With the Gulf of Saint Lawrence on our left, we began a climb to Cape Breton Highlands National Park.



The roads improved somewhat inside the park. We still had to spend much of our time watching the road in order to avoid the numerous cracks and bumps in the pavement, many which could easily send a bike careening out of control.

I was impressed with how blue the water was. No photograph can do it justice. From the numerous viewing spots, we had hoped to see some whales, which were supposed to be abundant in these waters. As hard as we looked, we never saw anything which we could even imagine might be a whale. Neither did we see any wildlife. There were warning signs everywhere admonishing visitors to beware of moose and deer. Throughout the whole day, we saw nothing larger than a ground squirrel. Earlier in the summer, a biker was killed hitting a moose, so I guess there are a few about.

After rounding the north side of the park, we started down the east coast with the Atlantic Ocean on our left. Leaving the park, the roads became rough again and the scenery became less impressive. By this time, I had seen enough of the Cabot Trail and was glad to reach Baddeck.

Baddeck is an attractive village located on one of the tributaries of Bras d' Or Lake.



Baddeck was the summer home of Alexander Graham Bell who did much of his research here. In 1909, Bell designed and built the first airplane to fly from a point within the British Empire. Tomorrow we plan to visit the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site, then start our trek westward.

I would like to return to Nova Scotia some day.

Mileage today: 183; Total mileage: 4,702

Posted: Friday - September 19, 2003 at 04:59 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 19 – PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Not many bikers make it to P.I.E. Since we may never pass this way again, we decided to check it out. If you didn't know you were in Canada, you might mistake P.I.E. for Iowa.

Before departing Baddeck, we took a tour of the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site which was most interesting. Bell spent much of his later life on Cape Breton Island because it reminded him of his native Scotland. Many of his inventions were tested at his home on the east shore of Bras d'Or Lake.

Leaving Baddeck, we took Trans Canadian 105 to New Glasgow, then took the ferry across the Northumberland Strait to Prince Edward Island.



Once on P.I.E., it took only an hour to reach the capital city of Charlottetown. The rolling hills and farms looked much like Iowa, except there were still some forests left. Corn, hay and potatoes seem to be the main crops. Like everywhere in Canada, the farm houses are exceptionally neat and well kept.



Charlottetown is a thriving city with an old but well maintained center with modern shopping centers on the outskirts. I had occasion to go into a local supermarket and was very impressed. The meat, produce and bakery items were better than most large supermarkets in the U.S.

The weather today was perfect for riding—clear, calm and 75 degrees. The forecast for tomorrow is a bit uncertain. There is a large area of rain to the west which we are going to have to go through eventually—if not tomorrow, then certainly on Monday. Our boots and gloves got so wet during our ride in the rain last week, we are going to dress a little differently this time.

Tomorrow we will take the 14-mile causeway to New Brunswick, then head north toward the Saint Lawrence River and Quebec.

Mileage today: 190; Total mileage: 4,892

Posted: Saturday - September 20, 2003 at 07:49 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 20 – NEW BRUNSWICK

Leaving P.I.E., we crossed the 14 km Confederation Bridge to New Brunswick, then followed the east coast of New Brunswick north to the Province of Quebec. We cheated Mother Nature again but our luck may be nearing an end.

We awoke this morning to a low overcast and a temperature in the mid 50's. It had obviously rained during the night and our bike covers were covered with water.

Last night we had major problems with our motel room and this morning, the manager said there would be no charge for the room and breakfast would be on the house. I thought that was a very nice gesture.

We were on the road by 9:00 a.m. and followed Trans Canada 1 to the Confederation Bridge. There are only two routes across the Northumberland Straits to Prince Edward Island. Both routes are free north-bound but it costs a considerable amount to leave the island. Automobiles are C\$38.00 and motorcycles are C\$15.25. That is quite a bit for a 12-minute ride. The Confederation Bridge is an engineering marvel built on pilings across a body of water subject to extremely rough conditions. It is a beautiful bridge and was a memorable ride.



Reaching New Brunswick, we turned north and followed the coast toward the Province of Quebec. Eastern New Brunswick is mostly farm land interspersed with forests and lakes. It is a very peaceful landscape. In the northern part, the leaves are starting to change color. It will not be long before the forests are ablaze with the colors of Autumn.

We had been told that the roads in New Brunswick were extremely poor but my observation was just the opposite. The roads were excellent, traffic was light and we made exceptionally good time. We crossed into Quebec at 3:00 p.m. and followed Highway 132 across the Gaspé Peninsula to the Saint Lawrence River. This is beautiful country.



This road is obviously a popular weekend ride for local bikers. We saw more motorcycles today than in all of our previous days combined.

Tomorrow we should be in Quebec City and have reservations at a small guesthouse close to the Old City. Rain is still expected but unfortunately, we can't find an English speaking weather report on the TV. We'll just have to take what comes.

Mileage today: 397; Total mileage: 5,289

Posted: Sunday - September 21, 2003 at 07:15 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 21 – QUEBEC

Another day of good weather and a full day spent exploring Quebec City.

We spent last night in Rimouski, a medium size town on the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River. We awoke this morning to overcast skies and a chilly 54 degrees. For the past three days, the forecast has been for rain and today was no exception. We debated whether to put on our rain gear but decided against it.

Rimouski is about 200 miles from Quebec City. The route follows the Saint Lawrence through one small town after another. Each town presents a different atmosphere. I enjoyed the different smells as we went from town to town. Most of the countryside is farm land growing corn and grain crops. There are also a lot of dairies. Unlike the rest of Canada, Quebec is "totally" French. None of the road signs or anything else for that matter is in English, and a majority of the people speak only French.

The Saint Lawrence River is probably five miles across at Rimouski. It looked cold and gray as we followed it toward Quebec City. The Saint Lawrence is the only access from the sea to the Great Lakes, yet we saw only a few ships. The farther west we traveled, the darker the sky became and we expected it to start raining any minute.



Reaching Quebec City, we crossed the river on a ferry which docked at the foot of the "old city." We had directions for reaching our hotel on Rue des Rampart. The instructions sounded easy but we soon became hopelessly lost trying to read the French names on the small streets and alleys. We finally had to call the hotel for help. That was an experience in itself.



The hotel turned out to be an excellent choice. The French/Cambodian couple who run it were very friendly and helpful. The hotel even provided free high speed wireless Internet service. That is good because it costs an arm and a leg to use the telephone.

The weather cleared up about noon and we spent the afternoon walking around the old city. Quebec is the only walled city in North America and we walked the entire parameter. Quebec is also the only city in Canada ever to be attacked by the U.S. (we lost). The original fortifications are mostly intact, as are many of the homes and buildings.

Vic's bike has developed an oil leak which needs to be looked at. There is a BMW dealer in Quebec City and we will try to get that taken care of tomorrow. We plan to spend a second night here, then depart early Wednesday morning.

Mileage today: 194; Total mileage: 5,483

Posted: Monday - September 22, 2003 at 06:07 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 22 – RAIN!

It was a good plan to stay two nights in Quebec City and again we lucked out on the weather—sort of.

Yesterday afternoon in Quebec City was perfect for touring. We spent several hours walking around the "Old City," had a good dinner, then retired to our hotel where we surfed the Internet and caught up with our correspondence.

I would recommend this hotel to anyone visiting Quebec. It is reasonably priced, extremely clean and the young Cambodian couple who run it are excellent hosts. The high speed wireless Internet service is great for anyone with a laptop. For those traveling without a computer, there is a free terminal for guests to use.

For more information, contact:

Manoir des Remparts
3 1/2, rue des Remparts
Vieux-Quebec, Quebec, Canada G1R3R4
(418) 692-1125
www.manoirdesremparts.com

We awoke this morning to the sound of rain on the window of our second floor room. It was a steady, soaking rain that lasted all day. It was not cold however.



Vic called the BMW shop first thing this morning and confirmed that they could work on his bike. We spent some time plotting the most direct route through the maze of Quebec's alleys and narrow streets. Complicating the matter is the fact that motorcycles are not allowed within the walled city. Fortunately, the BMW dealer was only 4.5 km from our hotel. I decided to stay behind and write post cards.

I admit I was a little concerned for Vic's well-being. Vic has not proven to be the best navigator in the world and this was about the worst day one could pick to be riding a motorcycle. The wet, hilly, cobblestone streets of Quebec are an accident waiting to happen. Vic DID get lost, but he kept his cool, stayed vertical and eventually found the BMW shop, having traveled only 25 km. Well done, Vic!

The BMW dealer in Quebec proved to be first rate. They knew exactly what the problem was and how to fix it and charged a fair price for their work. What a difference from the BMW dealer in Burlington, VT.

The Chateau Frontenac dominates the skyline of Quebec. Built in 1893 by the Canadian Railroad, it stands majestically on a bluff overlooking the Saint Lawrence River and appears in most of the photographs of the city. This is the hotel where the more affluent travelers to Quebec stay. Last night we had an ice cream cone in the hotel bistro. Today we went back for a bowl of soup. At least we can say we ate at the Frontenac.



Our hotel serves an excellent breakfast each morning between 8 and 10 a.m. We plan to get up early tomorrow and be ready to go as soon as we finish eating. The weather is forecast to improve and we hope to put a lot of miles behind us by night fall.

Mileage today: 0; Total mileage: 5,483

Posted: Tuesday - September 23, 2003 at 10:04 AM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 23 – WESTERN QUEBEC

Quebec is a beautiful city and the people are exceptionally friendly. This was a highlight of our trip.

We awoke early to clear skies and a cool 50 degrees. We were packed and ready to ride well before breakfast time, so we sat in the lobby and read the newspaper until 8:00 a.m.

Departing Quebec City, we followed the north shore of the Saint Lawrence for the first two hours. Our GPS suggested a shortcut that would bypass Montreal, so we left the interstate at Highway 31 and preceded more or less direct to St. Jerome. This cost us at least an hour but we saw some nice scenery.



Western Quebec is mostly farm land separated by forests. The barns are large and the farm houses are attractive and well kept. Each town is dominated by a huge church with a steeple that towers over every other building. Almost everyone in Quebec appears to be Catholic.



We rejoined the Trans Canada Highway at St. Jerome and made it to Val d' Or before nightfall. We were so tired, we grabbed the first motel we came to, which turned out to be excellent. We had a good meal in the hotel dining room and later paid a price for our over indulgence.

We made good progress today and would like to do the same tomorrow. The forecast is for rain in the morning but we plan an early departure anyway.

Mileage today: 477; Total mileage: 5,960

Posted: Thursday - September 25, 2003 at 06:23 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 24 – EASTERN ONTARIO

Eastern Ontario is mostly forest and lakes. Towns are few and far between. We spent nine hours on the road today and my feet were cold most of the time.

When we looked outside this morning, we were pleased to find clear skies. It was cold however—38 degrees—so we put on our cold weather gear and were on our way before 8:00 a.m.

Our first stop was Kirkland Lake, Ontario. After about an hour, it began to rain lightly and the wind began to increase. At times, it became so dark, we expected it to start snowing.

We had planned to follow the Trans Canada Highway, but during our first rest stop, a local biker recommended a more southerly route along Highway 101 to Wawa. Because of the weather, we decided to follow his suggestion.

Other than major traffic congestion in the vicinity of Timmins, this route took us through an isolated area of forests and lakes. This was like riding in a trench with thick forest on both sides and a low overcast above. The terrain was fairly flat, so one couldn't see anything but straight ahead and straight behind. This became very boring after a few hours. I was surprised that we never saw any wildlife. I don't recall even seeing a squirrel. There were signs everywhere warning of moose, but apparently they only come out at night.



It never did rain hard, just continuous showers with intermittent patches of clear sky. It was cold however and without my Gerbing electric jacket, I couldn't have made it.

Toward the end of the day, the forests began to thin and the scenery became more interesting. Large lakes were visible on both sides of the highway and the color of the trees became more varied.



We reached Wawa about 5:00 p.m. and wasted no time in finding a place to stay. After a good dinner at the only restaurant in town, we cleaned our bikes and turned in. Hopefully, Vic will have a restful night and I will be able to catch up on the sleep I didn't get last night.

Tomorrow we will head toward Manitoba.

Mileage today: 419; Total mileage: 6,379

Posted: Thursday - September 25, 2003 at 07:45 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 25 – WESTERN ONTARIO

A winter storm made riding conditions less than ideal. Never-the-less, we pressed on, hoping to find better weather further west. Conditions like this separates the BMW's from the Harley's.

Today Vic rose to the rank of "Master Navigator" and I humbly recant any remarks I may have made about his getting lost in Quebec City.

Departing Wawa this morning, I took the wrong road. I will not dwell on the mitigating circumstances (which were numerous) but will admit that if Vic had not caught the error, we would have ended up in Sault Ste. Marie about noon. Thanks Vic!

Today was not a nice day! It was cold, wet and windy; but we were dressed properly, our bikes were running good and we made it all the way to Ignace, Ontario before we decided to call it a day.

From Wawa, we followed the Trans Canada Highway to the port of Marathon, Ontario. We then followed the north shore of Lake Superior to Thunder Bay. Rain was continuous and the wind was strong and gusty off the lake. The temperature remained between 45 and 50 degrees.



I didn't realize that Thunder Bay was such a large City. The sign at the city limits said 117,000. It is a clean and modern city. I would have liked to have had the time to see more of it. The forests along Lake Superior are much more scenic than those in Eastern Ontario. The trees are taller and a lot more varied. This would have been a good day for sight seeing had the weather been better.

From Thunder Bay, we continued on TC-17 to the small town of Ignace. It is quite isolated and I'm not sure how the 1,000 residents make a living. Across the highway from the gas station, the aircraft which supplied the community for many years is on display.



Winnipeg is 280 miles to the west and once we get there, the weather should start to improve. This is turning into quite an adventure.

Mileage today: 450; Total mileage: 6,829

Posted: Friday - September 26, 2003 at 06:34 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 26 – WINNIPEG

More rain, wind and near freezing temperatures; but the forecast if for improvement.

We awoke this morning to low clouds and a steady, cold rain. Canada has an excellent TV weather channel and the map showed clearing conditions west of Winnipeg.

We had a good breakfast at the only restaurant in town, which happened to be at the gas station right next to our motel. We put on every piece of warm clothing we had and packed our bikes in the rain. We rejoined the Trans Canada Highway and headed northwest toward Vermillion Bay.

After about two hours of miserable riding conditions, we stopped at Kenora, Ontario for gas and something warm to drink. There is a chain of coffee shops across Canada called Tim Hortons. They bake the best fresh pastries I have ever tasted. Not exactly in keeping with my diet, but that went out the window in Quebec. I wish they had something like this in the U.S.

Once we reached Manitoba, the rain began to decrease and the landscape started to open up a bit. I was getting tired of the thick, dark forests of Ontario. Winnipeg is a clean, modern city with lots of tree lined streets and stately public buildings.



I was running low on engine oil and was hoping to find some at the BMW dealer here. I had been looking for some BMW synthetic oil since Quebec and have come to the conclusion that BMW oil is not available in Canada. Fortunately my bike doesn't use much oil but I will definitely need some before reaching the U.S. If I can't find any before then, I guess I can use Mobil 1.

We went directly through the center of Winnipeg, following TC-1 westbound. The temperature was still only 45 degrees as we left the protection of the tall buildings and headed into the open countryside. There must have been a 40 m.p.h. wind directly out of the north. Riding like this was very tiring. Reaching the small farming town of Portage la Prairie, we decided to stop for the night.

We found a new Super 8 motel which advertised high speed Internet service in each room. Because we have been staying in small motels in the hinterlands of Ontario, I have been unable to post blog entries for the past few days. The motel also has a washer and dryer, so after dinner tonight we plan to each do a load of wash.

We have decided to modify our route again and go to Calgary instead of Edmonton. Since we have both seen Jasper and Lake Louise, and because we are falling further behind schedule, we will save a few days by following TC-1 all the way to British Columbia. Vancouver is still over 1,400 miles away.

It is clear and cold in Manitoba tonight and we are optimistic of good riding conditions tomorrow. With luck, we could make Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan by tomorrow night.

Mileage today: 340; Total mileage: 7,169

Posted: Saturday - September 27, 2003 at 08:01 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 27 –SASKATCHEWAN

I stayed up late last night working on my computer. When I awoke this morning, Vic was already packed and was ready to go. I hate it when that happens!

It was 9:15 when we finally pulled out of the motel parking lot. The weather was perfect—clear skies, calm wind and a chilly 35 degrees. The sun was at our backs, the road was smooth and our electric clothing was keeping us warm. All was well with the world.

One thing we have both noticed, our bikes run better on Canadian gasoline. I don't know what it is, but it is not our imagination. Vic commented on this after the first tank full in Nova Scotia. I started paying attention and noticed it also. Maybe it is the additives—or lack there of—but our engines are definitely running better than they did on U.S. gas.

There is an excellent 4-lane spanning the width of Manitoba. The posted speed limit is 110 km/hr but almost everyone drives 10 km above that. Canadian law enforcement is much less aggressive than in the lower 48. There are no speed traps or patrol cars hiding in obscured locations trying to catch violators. What few patrol cars we have seen have been positioned in conspicuous places, apparently as a reminder to slow down, rather than a means of producing revenue. Canadian drivers seem to react well to this type of enforcement. Except for Quebec, Canadian drivers are among the best I have seen.

Western Manitoba is mostly flat farm land with a few patches of small, golden colored trees. The main crops appear to be wheat and hay. Clouds began to appear on horizon and by the time we reached Saskatchewan, we were encountering scattered showers.



We made our first stop in Moosomin, Saskatchewan. Because of our speed and a constant head wind, our fuel mileage was the lowest of our trip. I only got 36.7 mpg and Vic did even worse at 35.5. At this altitude, I would normally expect about 42 mpg and Vic should have done better than that. (My average for the trip so far has been 43.8 mpg.)

We made another stop in Regina, then stopped for the night in Moose Jaw. We should have continued for another hour, but we didn't realize that Saskatchewan was on mountain time and that we had gained an hour of daylight. We are going to bed early tonight and get an early start in the morning. The weather is expected to be good and we need to make it to Calgary before nightfall.

Mileage today: 345; Total mileage: 7,514

Posted: Sunday - September 28, 2003 at 07:51 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 28 – CALGARY

Another perfect day for riding and we easily made Calgary by mid afternoon. Tomorrow we will head into the Canadian Rockies.

For some reason, the Province of Saskatchewan has decided it should be in the mountain time zone. As a result, sunrise is not until 7:30 a.m. We were on the road and headed west by 6:30 a.m. It was COLD! The thermometer said 34 degrees and the few flakes of snow illuminated by our head lights confirmed it. Fortunately, the snow didn't last long and we were treated to a beautiful sunrise in our rear view mirrors.



At this temperature, there are a few weak spots in my biker clothing. After about an hour, my feet were numb and I couldn't feel my chin any more. If I was going to do much riding like this, I would have to make some adjustments. Heated socks would be a welcome addition.

We continued to follow TC-1 westbound. After two hours, we were so cold, we made a premature warm up stop at Tim Harton's in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. I love these city names. By mid morning, the temperature had risen into the mid 60's and the riding became more pleasant.

Our next stop was in Medicine Hat. We were making good time, holding a constant 75 m.p.h. across the gentle rolling hills of Canada's great plains. Western Saskatchewan is predominantly farm land. Crossing into Alberta, the farms gave way to grazing land with an occasional oil well.

The skyline of Calgary came into view about 3:00 p.m. We had made reservations at another Super-8 motel which advertised high speed Internet service. This proved incorrect and the motel turned out to be at the lower end of what we had expected. Calgary was warm and sunny and the forecast is for more of the same for the next several days. Hopefully we can put away our winter clothes.

We had met a young couple from Victoria, B.C. about three weeks ago in Utah. They were doing the same trip we were, only in reverse. Today I got an Email message from them. Based on their recommendations, we are revising our route once again. Tomorrow we will climb the eastern slope of the Canadian Rockies to Banff, then turn south on Highway 93 until joining Highway 3. We will follow Highway 3 westbound through the mountains to Hope, B.C., then rejoin TC-1 and continue to Abbotsford. This will take a little longer, but the weather is expected to be good and the scenery should be worth it.

Mileage today: 429; Total mileage: 7,943

Posted: Monday - September 29, 2003 at 07:31 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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DAY 29 – THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

Warm? Who said anything about it being warm in Calgary? This was the coldest morning of our trip. 30 degrees! At least it was clear.

Last night we decided to change our proposed route and take Highway 3 westbound through the Canadian Rockies. This turned out to be an excellent decision. The Trans Canada Highway would have been faster, but would not have been nearly as scenic. Thanks, Allan and Tracy!

The "included breakfast" at our motel consisted of day-old muffins and coffee. We passed on this and headed for a nearby Tim Hortons for a good breakfast. Our motel was located just a block away from Calgary University and Tim Hortons was filled with students cramming for exams. This brought back memories of times I really don't care to repeat. I'd much rather be riding my bike through the Canadian Rockies.

After breakfast, we left the congested traffic of Calgary and started a gradual climb into the foothills of the Rockies. Wow, it was cold! It took all the electricity my bike could generate to power my heated grips and jacket. The sky was absolutely clear and the sun at our backs provided a breathtaking panorama of the approaching mountains. Parts of Colorado are impressive, but nothing surpasses the beauty of the Canadian Rockies.



We stopped at Starbucks in Banff for a warm-up latté, then headed west to intercept Highway 93 southbound toward Cranbrook. I have never seen more spectacular scenery. The small resort town of Radium Hot Springs looked very interesting. I wish we had not been so far behind schedule. I would have liked to have explored that area and checked out the spa.

At Cranbrook, we turned west on Highway 3. There were a lot of twists and turns on this road with many chances to take the wrong turn. This happened shortly after leaving Salmo and we found ourselves in the center of the copper mining town of Trail. Definitely not recommended!

I am disappointed in the poor performance of the Garmin GPS V in Canada compared to its excellent operation in the U.S. Garmin should hire some competent programmers and fix this problem. Our northern neighbors deserve better service from this company.

We finally rejoined our intended route. I expected to run out of the excellent scenery but it just kept getting better. I would like to return to southern B.C. in the summer and explore this beautiful area more fully.



We stopped for the night in Grand Forks, B.C. where we had one of the best dinners of our trip at the Station Pub. We ate later than normal which often proves troublesome for Vic. I was expecting a noisy night but was pleasantly surprised when we both slept like logs.

Tomorrow we will head for Abbotsford and then do battle with U.S. Customs to reenter our homeland. I hope there is not some new security threat; I don't feel like going through the hassle which seems to be the norm these days.

Mileage today: 470; Total mileage: 8,413

Posted: Wednesday - October 1, 2003 at 06:17 AM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 30 – BACK IN THE U.S.A.

We crossed the Canada/U.S. border south of Abbotsford at 3:15 p.m. this afternoon. Canada is a peaceful, friendly country to visit. We could learn some things from our northern neighbors.

It was clear and cold this morning in Grand Forks, B.C. where we had spent the night. The thermometer said 35 degrees. While I finished yesterday's blog, Vic walked across the street for coffee at the Chevron gas station. The R.C.M.P. were investigating a holdup which had occurred during the night. For some reason this surprised me. Grand Forks didn't seem like a place where things like that ever happened.

We decided to ride the short distance to Greenwood where a local restaurant had been recommended. Greenwood is a small village that time seems to have passed by. We had no problem finding the Welcome Home Tea Room, where the grandmotherly owner personally prepared one of the best breakfasts we have had.



While we ate, the town philosopher explained in detail what made Greenwood the best place in the world to live. We were told that the town's motto is "Don't stay long; or you will stay forever." There might be something to this.

From Greenwood, we continued westbound on Highway 3 to the resort city of Osoyoos. The alpine forests begin to give way to more arid conditions similar to those found in the U.S. southwest.

Further to the west, the small town of Keremeos is nestled in valley where all kinds of fruit is grown.

At Princeton, we turned south and dipped through Manning Provincial Park. Every time I expected the spectacular scenery to end, we would go around a curve and something better would appear.



Just before reaching Hope, B.C., we were able to observe the results of the massive landslide which occurred in 1965, burring an entire valley. After Hope, we joined the 4-lane Trans Canada highway and made a high speed run to Abbotsford. We treated ourselves one last time to a warm pastry at Tim Hortons, then crossed into the U.S. at the Sumas, WA Crossing.

I was surprised at how smoothly our crossing went. As it turned out, Vic and the Customs Agent had a mutual friend in Murphys, CA.

There was still some daylight left and we decided to ride for another hour or so. We joined I-5 at Bellingham and followed the fast moving traffic through Seattle and Tacoma to Olympia, WA. We found a very nice Comfort Inn, thinking we had accumulated enough points for a free room. It turned out we were 1,000 points short, but decided to stay anyway. We had an excellent Italian dinner tonight.

Tomorrow we will see how far south we can go.

Mileage today: 470; Total mileage: 8,883

Posted: Wednesday - October 1, 2003 at 10:41 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 31 - REDDING, CA

All good things must come to an end. Our luck ran out ten minutes north of Redding and less than 300 miles from home.

After a good nights sleep in one of the nicest motels of our trip, we departed Olympia, Washington just after 8:00 a.m. It was overcast with temperatures in the mid 60's. We rejoined I-5 and made good time southbound through Portland, Salem and Eugene. The sun broke through the clouds shortly after noon and we were able to shed a few layers of clothing. Traffic was light as we continued past Medford to the California border.

As Mt. Shasta came into view, we were surprised at the small amount of snow. Lake Shasta was also very low. California is going to need a lot of rain this winter to prevent serious water problems next summer.



We had planned to stop for the night in Redding, CA. I suggested we fuel our bikes before we got into the city. I knew there was a Chevron station at the Shasta Dam off-ramp, not far from the factory where my Russell seat had been made.

I slowed down and signaled for the turn off, but when I looked in my rear view mirror, Vic was nowhere in sight. He had been there just a few minutes before, so I stopped short of the off-ramp so he wouldn't pass it by. Vic soon came into view, but at a much reduced speed and followed me to the gas station.

As soon as he rode past, I could tell that something was wrong with his engine. Vic confirmed that it apparently was running on only one cylinder. Vic knows a lot about engines and quickly checked the obvious things that might have failed. Nothing was apparent.

We fueled our bikes and Vic thought he could make it to the motel which was less than ten miles away. I followed him the rest of the way and upon reaching the motel, Vic checked everything he could in the parking lot by the light of a flashlight. Nothing could be found. The engine would idle well enough but any application of power would cause it to cough and shake—as one might expect of a two cylinder engine running on only one cylinder.

Not much could be done tonight, so we cleaned up and had a good dinner at a nearby Applebees. Considering our situation over dinner, we realized that things could have been a lot worse. We could be stranded in the woods of Northern Ontario, in the cold rain, with nothing but moose and wolves within a hundred miles. Tomorrow we will give some more thought on what to do.

Mileage today: 540; Total mileage: 9,423

Posted: Friday - October 3, 2003 at 09:40 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

DAY 32 - HOME!

By nightfall, we had both ridden our bikes into the driveways of our respective homes with no scratches to ourselves or our bikes. You can't argue with success. This has been an adventure we won't soon forget.

I slept like a log in the free room we got with the points we had accumulated from previous stays in this motel chain. Vic doesn't sleep very much and is usually awake "hours" before I am. When I opened my eyes this morning, he was already on the phone arranging for a tow truck to transport his bike to the BMW dealer in Chico, CA.

We both belong to the BMW Motorcycle Roadside Assistance Plan, an excellent organization which I had occasion to use several years ago. While Vic was on the phone, the helpful lady in Boston contacted a local towing service with a tilt bed truck who said they would be at the hotel no later than 7:30 a.m. With the \$100 towing allowance, Vic would only have to pay \$150 out of his own pocket. Not a bad deal considering the other options.

We quickly packed our things and while eating our complimentary breakfast, the tow truck drove into the parking lot. The driver had experience transporting motorcycles, saying that he had picked up a lot of Harley's in the past. This was the first BMW he had transported but it didn't take long before Vic's bike was loaded and secured for the 70 mile trip to Chico.



We said our good-byes and Vic was on his way. I finished packing and departed soon after for my southbound run to Camarillo. After a month ridding with Vic, it felt strange and a little lonely ridding alone. My trip home was long and tiring but fortunately, uneventful.

I have always been a "ship" nut and stopped in Vallejo long enough to take a picture of my bike with some of the Naval reserve fleet in the background.



I followed I-5 to a point just west of Sacramento, then cut through the Bay Area to intercept Highway 101. Spending the past month away from California, I had almost forgotten what congestion is really like. The freeways in the Bay Area are nearly as rough as the roads in Nova Scotia, every third vehicle is an SUV driving at twice the posted speed limit, and the aggressive discourtesy of the drivers raise the question of why I choose to live in a place like this. Throughout our trip of almost 10,000 miles, I did not have a really "close" call while riding my bike. I had two today.

I pulled into my driveway at 6:30 p.m. Home never looked so good.

I called Vic and was happy to hear that the problem with his bike had been minor. The needle in his left carburetor had actually broken off. The repair had taken less than an hour at a cost of only \$30. From Chico, it was only 185 miles to Murphys, CA and Vic was relaxing in his hot tub—no doubt also glad be home.

Mileage today: 575: Total mileage: 9,998

Posted: Saturday - October 4, 2003 at 08:52 AM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

EPILOGUE

This trip started out to be a "grand adventure" and in that, it was a rounding success. I have a new respect for the size of our country—and of Canada—and what our forefathers must have gone through to explore and settle it.

As an airline pilot, I have traveled across this country hundreds of times, usually in six hours or less at altitudes above 30,000 feet. For over thirty years I have circled spots on maps which I thought some day I would like to see from the ground. A motorcycle is the ideal vehicle from which to explore. On a motorcycle, one not only experiences the sights, but also the sounds, smells and the "feeling" of the country passing by. I would not have wanted to have made this trip any other way.

This trip was also an adventure in another respect. I am used to riding alone, which I normally prefer. Taking a trip like this with a friend—even a good friend—can be an adventure in itself. Thanks to Vic's good nature, positive attitude and easy going personality, we were able to survive thirty-three days on the road together. Thanks's, Vic.

This trip was also a test of both our bikes and the clothing we had selected to wear. Even considering Vic's mechanical problem, BMW's are great road bikes. For a trip like this, I can't think of another bike that I would rather have had. We experienced about every road and weather condition one could expect and made it through. Our bikes never failed to start, their weather protection proved superb and they handled well over a wide range of speeds while carrying heavy loads.

A few statistics:

Total miles traveled: 9,998 (Vic 9,758)
Total fuel used: 230 gals (Vic 214 gals)
Average fuel price: \$2.20/gal
Average fuel mileage: 43.94 m.p.g. (Vic 45.60 m.p.g.)
Total oil consumption: 1.5 qts
Tires: Bridgestone BT020 (10K miles, front & rear)

One clear distinction between Vic's R100RT and my R1100RT is that the older bike provides better weather protection than the newer one. In updating the RT, style took president over functionality.

On the other hand, the suspension of the 1100 is much improved over the 100. The higher capacity alternator is also an improvement, allowing the use of heated grips and electric clothing without the worry of discharging the battery. The additional fuel capacity of the 1100 was useful and the ABS was worth the price of a new bike. All in all however, the two bikes were pretty well matched.

During the year we spent planning this trip, we gave a lot of thought to our clothing and accessories. This paid off.

Our SealLine waterproof duffles proved invaluable. Even during heavy rain, they remained water tight.

The comments and observations made on my 7/31/03 blog concerning our clothing proved generally correct. Not until this trip however had I worn my Savanna-2 jacket through extended periods of rain. The results were somewhat mixed. The Savanna-2 is not intended to be an all-weather winter jacket. Due to it's breathable design, all rain protection is provided by a wind and water proof liner.

I found this liner is best worn as a separate layer of clothing—not zipped into the jacket as intended. The liner worked well in keeping me dry, however after several hours, the Savanna-2 became so saturated with water, that it gained about ten pounds in weight. It was also embarrassing to enter a restaurant or

convenience store because of the huge puddle of water that would form as soon as I stopped moving. Also, when riding in cold weather, the wind flowing through the water soaked fabric would become extremely cold.

I found a much better solution was to eliminate the liner and instead, wear a standard rain jacket on the outside. Once I tried this combination, I had no further problems. I should add that my BMW over pants worked exceptionally well, as did the Gerbing electric jacket liner. I would consider these two items as "must have" for anyone riding in cold weather.

Another problem was that my Frank Thomas boots proved not to be as waterproof as advertised. Once your socks get wet, there is no way to keep your feet warm. Next time, I will revert to the "low-tech" rubber over boots which I previously used with good results.

Another disappointment was my BMW Rain Gloves. They turned out to be a total joke! After several hours in the rain, the gloves became totally saturated and simply making a fist, would squeeze several ounces of water out of each glove. Once they were removed, they were almost impossible to get back on and it took several days for them to dry out. Next time, I am going to use the "lobster gloves" sold by Aerostitch which slip over and provide water protection to standard gloves.

The most important aspect of riding safely in cold, wet weather is to stay warm. There is nothing more distracting than to be cold, and dry hands and feet are absolutely essential to this end. Heated clothing relates directly to safety because it allows one to wear fewer layers of lighter clothing which does not restrict one's freedom of movement. My Gerbing jacket liner worked exceptionally well. Vic's Wedder vest worked well also, however the optional electric sleeves were more trouble than they were worth.

As for my impressions gained during the trip, I share Vic's observations completely. In addition, I was impressed with Southern Ontario. The area around Thunder Bay would have been beautiful had we not been in the midst of a winter storm. I am going back to that area some day.

I was awed by the vast forests of Northwest Ontario. Throughout our trip however, I was disappointed not to see more wildlife. It was not until reaching British Columbia that we saw anything larger than a ground squirrel.

I was also disappointed in the Cabot Trail. I had heard so much about this area that perhaps I expected too much. The roads in Cape Breton are the worst in Canada and the scenery in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park is nothing compared to that of British Columbia. I enjoyed the Southeast Coast of N.S. and the Bras d'Or Lakes region of Cape Breton more than the Cabot Trail. For anyone considering a trip to N.S. just to ride the Cabot Trail, my recommendation would be to find somewhere closer to home.

I agree with Vic's comment about the friendly people we met throughout our trip. From the girl in the bagel shop in Eastern Colorado, to the farmer in Illinois who got off his tractor to answer a question about soy beans, to the French speaking auto mechanic in Quebec who gave Vic directions in English—everyone we met (Lester excluded) was genuinely friendly and went out of their way to be helpful.

Canada is a beautiful country and Canadians are good people. In many ways, both remind me of the U.S. when I was growing up. The pace is more relaxed and the people actually take time to talk with one another. And Canada is one of the few countries left that seems to like Americans. At least that is the impression I got. I enjoyed Canada very much and now have a much better feeling for its geography.

I hope those of you who have been following our travels have enjoyed sharing our experiences. This was truly a grand adventure which neither Vic nor I will soon forget.



Posted: Sunday - October 5, 2003 at 02:23 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)

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Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia

VIC'S SUMMARY

We met a lot of nice people during our trip—with the exception of Lester, the BMW dealer in Burlington, VT.

I always enjoy Utah; the changing seasons give it a different beauty every time I go there. It is too bad we could not have spent more time there. Canyonlands is something we definitely should have done. We really didn't have our pacing down and thought we needed to move on.

The Rocky Mountain National Park was a must see during our trip. Nebraska was sad, with all the little towns drying up. The Iowa attitude is unfortunate, when Illinois and Indiana have so much pride.

I enjoyed seeing how the locks on the Mississippi worked. Revisiting the Air Force Museum was fun.

It was a real bummer going off route to Cincinnati for the windshield replacement and it not being there. Cincinnati was a waste of time, although our stay at the Sleep Inn was one of our best lodgings during the trip.

I really enjoyed upstate New York, the ride along Lake Erie, Niagara Falls and Lake Placid. VT, NH, and ME were places to log into your mind. It is too bad it was raining so hard at Bar Harbor. I think we would have enjoyed spending more time there.

The CAT ferry was a once in a lifetime experience. The little towns and the ride along the Lighthouse route in Nova Scotia was more fun than the Cabot Trail. I thought the visit to Peggy's Cove was one of the highlights of Nova Scotia. I enjoyed our visit to Halifax and the Citadel. I regret not having seen the Halifax Maritime Museum.

Prince Edward Island was interesting. The bridge ride across the Northumberland Straits was a once in a lifetime experience. We now know what New Brunswick is like.

I really enjoyed our visit to the walled City of Quebec and the whole province. I have been chided and feel sort of dumb about getting lost trying to find the BMW dealer in Vanier. That was not easy to find with it raining so hard, and not being able to understand the road signs. I don't know what else I could have done. The dealer couldn't believe somebody would be out riding in weather like that. I will always remember the good French cuisine and desserts in Quebec.

The ride across the prairie provinces was interesting. I now know what the country was like where my mother was born and spent her early years. Andrew and Traci gave us good advice on our route through B.C., as it was a fun ride and the scenery was beautiful.

If I ever need serious BMW service, Ozzies in Chico will be the place to go. It is not a super store like A&S with all their fancy service writers, which is dialed into their pricing. It is a real world shop, where they know their stuff. It is equal to the shop in Vanier, Quebec.

All in all, it was a good trip, but a person always tries to cram in too much to see, in too short a time. Been there, done that.....

Vic

Posted: Sunday - October 5, 2003 at 01:02 PM [Motorcycle Trip to Nova Scotia](#)