

Good Ride, Bad Day

What's that phrase, "Stuff happens"? We had one of those times, when it was a good ride, but a bad day.

Michael Jernigan, Dusty Webb and I were all jonesing for a ride. Sometimes you just have to get out and go, let go of the troubles of life, and let God lead you down the road, wherever it takes you. And then, sometimes, reality bites you in the butt, too.

We had one of those days.

I'm always amazed that folks will meet at 5:45 in the morning to go for an all-day ride. I had suggested the Houghton Park & Ride, because it's near 405 and where I live, and Michael and Dusty were both having to come down 405. My plan was to meet, discuss the route, pray before we took off, and then leave by 6:00. And, bang, those guys get there, we go get gas for Dusty (so his 100-mile tank starts off good), and we're off down the road.

It was to be a 5 Steeple-Chase, 4 Wing Washington site day. We'd head down I-5, stopping at the Mima Mounds, buzzing over to the Tenino Steeple Chase site, zipping to a GWTA breakfast in Chehalis, scooting out 6 for a Steeple, then a back-road to Hwy 4 for 2 more Steeples, then to Ilwaco for a Wing Washington site, back up 101 for 2 more, then to Hoquiam for our last site, and then home. 400-ish miles, lots of sites. So what if it's early February and freezing. We were cruising, man!

And we did pretty well for the first part of the day, considering. OK, I might have been going a bit faster than traffic, which sucks gas a bit faster for Dusty. So we all tanked up in Tenino. And we might have been a little late for the GWTA breakfast (where Dusty won 2 of the 50-50 prizes off of the 5 tickets I gave him). But no rain to speak of, not too cold. Things were going pretty good, mostly.

At Frances we were to take a back-road to the Naselle area. When we made the turn, I knew right away that we might have problems. A mile later, I decided that we couldn't go 18-20 miles on a wet, muddy, single-lane dirt road, and we had to turn around. Oh well, stuff happens.

By the time we did get to Naselle, we were a bit off track for the day. We found the Steeple site, just across from the liquor store (isn't that a convenient way to remember where it is?). And we had to find more gas, so we went back up to the main road. Time for a bathroom break, and that's when Dusty heard the first news that there might be something happening with his daughter back in Lynnwood, when he checked his voicemail. Uh-oh. We all decided that we would continue on, and make changes to the route if necessary.

Our Chinook site was just a little different than my GPS-guess had me going, but we found it. And the Ilwaco site (a Post Office) was spot on. But we couldn't find a place for lunch there; instead, folks pointed us to Long Beach. We found a place with good food, but a bit pricey. But Dusty also heard more news about his daughter, and it was looking like we might have to make a bee-line home. We found the next Wing Washington site in Artichoke, and all went in for coffee, a shake or whatever for a break.

We let Dusty lead, just in case the gas didn't hold up. Got gas in Aberdeen, and that's when it became crystal clear to Michael and I that we had to forego the site in Hoquiam, and just head up I-5 to home. About half-way there, just south of Olympia, Dusty zooms ahead and zips to the exit. Michael and I are figuring it's an early gas stop, but in reality Dusty's sun glasses were making it nearly impossible to see clearly, and he just wanted to swap to clear ones. Well, there was gas, and if we topped off, we wouldn't have to stop again, so that's what we did.

Because Dusty was in stressed state of mind, Michael and I decided to follow him to his exit in Lynnwood. We said our good byes to each other there, and went our separate ways home.

Overall, a good day for riding, but a bad day in general. We did get 4 Steeple Chase sites, and 4 Wing Washington sites, which is all good. And we shared with a brother needing the comfort of fellowship, too. Which helps turn a bad day around, we hope.

Jerry Weltner







