

MLK Day Ride – Making Lemonade

We've all been known to make great plans, only to have them unexpectedly dashed, and then we have to make lemonade out of lemons. That's what happened to me on my Martin Luther King day ride.

I had it all planned out: 5 sites (4 Steeple Chase sites, and 1 Wing Washington site) on a single day, a day that happened to be a "Partly Sunny" day amongst a string of showers during January. We'd hit 2 on Whidbey Island, then swing over to the Peninsula for 1, down to Tacoma for another, and then finishing off in Carnation for the last one. 250-ish miles, home by 5:30. Rock 'n Roll.

Then the weather comes in to have the final say.

After several folks backed out, it's just Dusty Webb and I meeting at the Houghton Park & Ride at 6:45 am on that vacation-day Monday. Since we were both there, we got an early start, heading up 405 to the Mukilteo ferry to Whidbey Island. The ferry ride was our first clue that the day was going to be WINDY. After getting some coffee, we head back down to the bikes to try and keep them from falling over in the multiple-foot swells we were having.

Since Dusty isn't doing Wing Washington, and I already had the Langley site anyway, we go to the Steeple Chase site in Freeland. What do you know? It's the same one we had in '05! By now the sun has come up, and Dusty decides to mount his new-to-him helmet video camera. (I decide to start calling him "Darth Kodak" because of the very unusual look the camera gives him.)

Making our way the 20-ish miles to the ferry to Port Townsend, we get our first real gush of wind, and end up angling the bikes about 30-40 degrees off center to keep them going in a straight line. (To get the better effect for the camera, Dusty has to hold his head straight up while keeping the bike leaned into the wind. It's quite a sight!) Unbeknownst to us, the ferry won't run in high winds. So we decide to go get another cup of coffee to wait a bit to see if the wind quiets anymore. The café is actually closed, but the owners are there waiting for a delivery, and have pity on the two wind-swept waifs tapping on their door. Nice visit with the owner, discussing the "banana belt" that exists at that place. After half-an-hour, the wind is still howling, and we decide we need to find another way to go.

Hmmm. There IS a site up at Marblemount, and we don't need a ferry to get there. We decide that's the way to go, and we head up Hwy 20 all the way. Stop at Deception Pass for Dusty to put in a new memory chip in the video camera, and we're on our way!

The road up to Marblemount is sparsely traveled on this holiday, and we, um, "make good time". I forget that Dusty only gets around 100 miles per tank, and nearly lose him in Concrete, before I figure out that, "Oh, he must have been signaling that he

needed gas!", and head back to find him. Anywhere we stop, people give Darth Kodak a weird look. (It's great to see!) Now, I only had an approximate address for the site in Marblemount, so I slow significantly as we approach the town. My GPS guess is only 120 feet off the mark, and I find the cute little six-person Chapel just outside of Marblemount proper. We're both hungry, and head into town for lunch. Oops. The restaurant I'm familiar with is closed for the winter, so we head back down the mountain to another place we saw right across the street from the Chapel. WHOA! What's that? Another church, with the name "Marblemount Chapel" that I only see on the way back! We decide to get picture of each site, and figure out which one is right later. (Turns out the small white Chapel we first encountered is the right site.)

Lunch at the little café is down-right wonderful, and the history embodied at the place is cool. Everybody who comes in seems to know everybody else, and they welcome Dusty and I warmly. Very nice folks. I'll have lunch there again! (Funny thing though: they only serve breakfast.)

For our trip home we decided to go via Darrington and Arlington (stopping for gas again in Arlington), taking I-5 south. Dusty gets off near his place in Lynnwood, and I take 405 back to Redmond.

So, was this a failure of a trip? No way! We had a blast, it didn't rain, and we met an assortment of interesting folks everywhere we stopped. We most certainly made lemonade out of the lemons the weather gave us! I'd call that a very cool day!

Jerry Weltner



Darth Kodak



Mukilteo Ferry



Windy Day at Keystone Ferry



Freeland – St. Augustine Church



Marblemount – Wildwood Chapel