

Pacific Pete Hits The Road

2000 miles down Highway 101

- [What](#)
- [How](#)
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Posted by: **pacifipete** | October 2, 2008

Santa Cruz

These are the platforms where we pitched our tents last night. No dirt, no flies!



Steve, who has already had a number of problems, including his trailer breaking down twice (finally buying a good used trailer from a sympathetic shop owner), had another problem today: the bolt holding his seat on broke. He rode the last ten miles sitting on an assemblage of two tennis shoes, held together by duct tape.

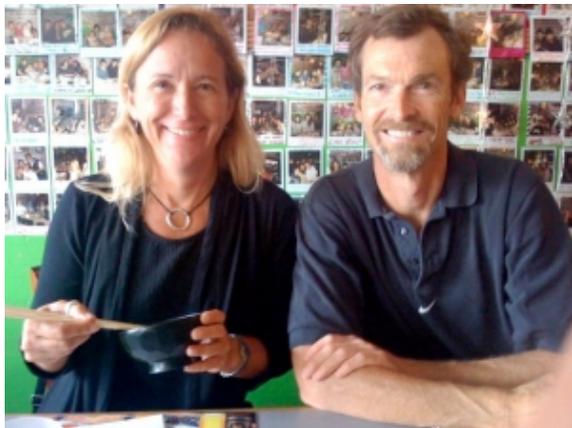




This picture is of the netting in John's tent. The duct tape is covering up six bite marks ... from the skunks. The skunks were nibbling on his tent! What if he had heard them, figured them to be 'coons, and kicked out? You might think we smell bad now...



Met up with Maryland buddies Lise+Pete for a great sushi lunch. Very strange to ride in a car again. I almost feel as if I've slipped through the back of the wardrobe into another world, but that the two worlds just momentarily co-existed. Kayaking on Saturday!



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Posted by: [pacificpete](#) | October 2, 2008

More varmints!

As some of you might have seen once in a while, I can be a wee bit competitive. Yesterday, at the end of a long hard ride, I decided to try staying with our two climbers up a 700 foot hill. I was almost able to do it. Emboldened thereby, I seized the opportunity of a flat section with a tailwind to put my stamp on the group, to put the hammer down! I can't climb, but I CAN make some speed on the flats. Four miles averaging 23-24 mph later I eased up, as I could no longer see them in my rear view mirror Triumph! Huzzahs!

But as the endorphins faded, I realized that my thighs were in serious pain, and a calf about to cramp up. As we had no Gatorade or recovery drinks, and as I didn't sleep all that well (why sleep when you can stare at the pounding surf?), today was disasterous. 27 reasonably easy miles almost killed me.

We're in a crap KOA campground, quite a contrast from last night. Hard dirt for tents, swarming flies, no beach access. However, there are quite a few raised platforms (see pic). In theory, we weren't supposed to use them, but the chance to get away from the dirt and flies was just too tempting, so about half of us are using them.

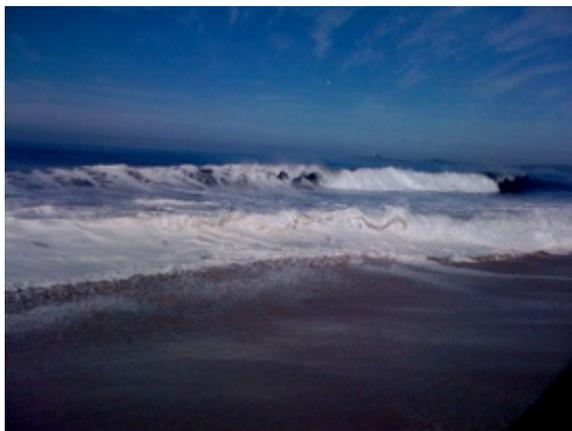
At the camp store I had a chocolate milk, a coke, and an iced double espresso. Then I wandered back to my tent and immediately fell asleep, just in time for dinner.

Tonight, however, dinner was on the minds of others as well. A persistent rustling woke me up at midnight. I hopped out of the tent to rejoin the running battle with the 'coons, only to find myself staring at a skunk, about seven feet away, sitting in my bowl while it nibbled on half a granola bar that I'd left in my handlebar bag. Backing slowly away, I almost ran into the first one's mate, who was nibbling on another bike.

Waving my flashlight and saying "There's a freaking skunk in my bowl!" quite loudly, and plaintively, helped convince them to amble off, in their own good time, towards a nearby RV (hate RVs).

From now on, I follow the example of Sally (our fearless leader) and will bring all five bike bags in the tent with me.





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Posted by: [pacificpete](#) | October 1, 2008

[Are You Going To San Francisco...](#)

Let's start at the end. This is my tent, on the absolutely pristine beach, surf softly crashing and roaring in the background. Since we went 69 tough miles today (including up and down some hills in SF), we're planning only 24 miles tomorrow. A nothing! Piece o' cake. Noone is allowed up before 7, intend to stay until it warms up a bit and try a spot of body-surfing.

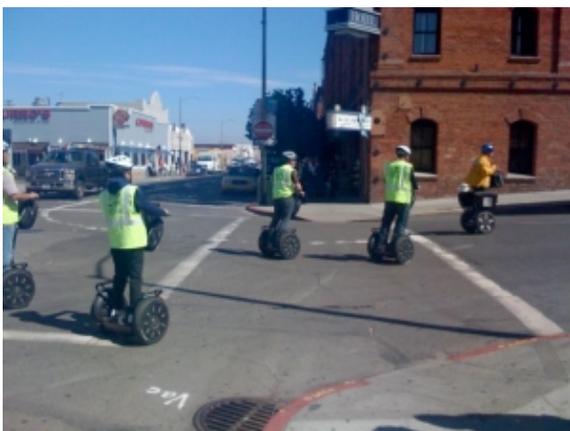


We had to do 30 tough miles after SF, including the usual no-shoulder passes. However, no RV's today (not the weekend), so it was just a matter of putting your head down and going. However, at about 4:30 we had to stop for some carbs or we'd bonk. Hence the following picture, taken at a Taco Bell famous for it's view of the surfers.

Darn, battery dying. Short story: riding from bridge to wharf great. Coda to last night's attack: racoon got on food box, first guy up woke entire campground shouting to no avail, 60yo 95-lb grandmother got up, grabbed a hammer from the toolkit, and had the varmint gone in 30 seconds.



The jaunt into SF was a real eye-opener. I didn't really want to to fisherman's wharf, but Hans looked very disappointed and so off we went.





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Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 30, 2008

[To SanFran](#)

Never really got the camera out today, too busy because I was one of the cooks. Today we made Thai curry that was nice, but bland.

Tomorrow we zip right through the city, not stopping. The problem is that it takes time to enjoy San Fran, and we just don't have it. However, we are going over the golden gate, so not a total loss.

After all the drama yesterday, today was a bit tame. However, we soon have monteray and big sur coming up, so the drama will return.

As I'm writing this, racoons enter the site and knock over a bike. Big racoons!

Update: screams and yells from the other part of our site where people are trying to get rid of a racoon that got inside of our wooden food box.

Update 2: my bike has been attacked twice (evidently the tube of Butt Butt'r in my handlebar bag smells nice), all panniers are now in the tent. They are prowling outside right now...this may be the last dispatch I can send before they break through...aaarrggghhh....

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Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 28, 2008

[Mendocino](#)

(Intermittent postings because of poor connectivity in cal. Whoda figured?)

Wife! We need to come back here. This is the most gorgeous swath of coast you can imagine. And as I keep saying, you really appreciate it when you work for every foot.

Tomorrow we bike nearly 70 miles to Bodega Bay. Wasn't this in Hitchcock's Birds? Some place called "Tide's Wharf" claims to have been in the film. Anyone know more?

John is about to enter the phone booth to become Bikerman! (i.e. apply Butt Butt'r).



Not only are the potsmokers mainstream, but they are unionized (why?) and have a sense of civic responsibility.



I love this flag. Northern California is very dry and rural, bit there's always a nice flavoring of peaceniks and nutjobs.



Today (Sunday) was one of the hardest days of biking I've ever done, between the 69 miles, the 4700 feet of climbing (1000 feet more than any other day), and the narrow twisty uphill with no shoulder.

I started the day feeling half-awake, but definitely woke up after almost being creamed by an RV, who passed me up on a blind curve, no shoulder, and another RV coming the other way. I caught a glimpse of the passenger's shocked face as she slid by inches away. I don't know whether she was shocked because she thought I was about to be smushed, or if it was because she could hear what I was yelling at her. Just to make sure of the latter, I caught up with them on the downhill and repeated it all as loudly as I could.

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Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 25, 2008

Ugh.

I need a day off. Seven straight days of biking is taking its toll! I am totally out of energy. Luckily, tomorrow only 40-odd miles, though much of it is straight up.

(next day)

Went out the gate today and headed right up, 4.5 mile climb. Then 10 miles down. Then another mile up, steeper!

Then, glorious sun as we cruised along the beach. There was one downside, as a guy carrying nothing cruised past, bruising our egos. Luckily, Nita still had some energy and kicked his behind. We all felt better.

As we cruised along today, we came to the following realizations: 1) we were meant to do this, not to sit in some cubicle, and 2) we're in a groove. We could bike to Argentina if we want; we have the ability.

The pictures are of the other rabbits: John, Nita, and Bill, the three Johns: Count John (an analyst), Dr John (duh), and Sir John (a Brit). Also, me and someone.





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Posted by: **pacifipete** | September 24, 2008

[Valley of the Giants](#)

Today was a 64-mile jaunt, mostly through redwoods. We started with 26 tough miles to get to Ferndale, a town so pretty it could be Pleasantville. We stopped for second breakfast at Pappa Jo's, a diner straight out of a western, complete with a poker game going on in the back (at ten in the morning). Possibly the best pancakes I've ever had: they came with a big dollup of butter, which quickly melted and infused the pancakes. The edges were just a tad crispy.

Our campground is in the redwoods, almost as pretty as Jedidiah. As it was mostly empty, we reserved two sites on either side of a loop and set up our tents in between. Definitely the prettiest site we've camped at.





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Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 23, 2008

[Fun stuff](#)

Today was a bit of a no-op: 52 miles, but no serious climbing. A few folk had adventures. One guy's bike and trailer went separate ways while he was doing 20 mph. The trailer was kindling, but a local biking behind him went and got his truck and drove him to a bike shop.

Another guy yesterday broke several spokes and had to spend the night in a hotel, take a \$200 taxi ride to a real town, and have his wheel rebuilt.

We saw elk today. I have pictures, but not on the phone. A guy was just explaining to us that there was just one stag for the whole herd (the harem), when the stag, um, started smooching with one of the harem. No pictures of that.

Also, remember the guy who was complaining about snoring the other day? He set his tent up in the middle of one of the three sites last night. We four snorers noticed and set up our tents in a ring around his. 😊



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Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 21, 2008

[A Hill Too Far](#)

1260 feet, 5 miles of 5% grade, biggest single hill on the tour.

It started out innocuously, just a gentle upslope for the first half mile. It quickly pitched up, though. Pretty soon I was down on my granny (smallest chainring) in my third lowest gear, doing 4 miles an hour. By this time, I was spinning happily and nearing 200 feet up. The sun was shining and I was feeling good.

300 feet.

Still feeling strong, but not all that happy. Every turn included a sharp little upslope that destroyed my groove. And you have to have a groove to go up a big hill.

400 feet.

I'd carefully planned my assault on the hill. I got up slowly, took an extra shower, and made sure Nita and Count John, the beat two climbers, left before I did. Noone likes being passed on a hill. Being passed on a hill is a smackdown, a declaration that you aren't a real man. I'm sometimes a bit competitive.

500 feet.

Pretty trees.

600 feet.

Getting tired. I pulled off for a couple Oreos. Freshly recharged, I motored on.

700 feet.

The slope was getting steeper, so I shifted down and was now moving at 3.5 mph.

800 feet.

A figure in black appeared in my tiny rear view mirror. Black might mean Laura, a 20-something Brit who has shown signs of being able to outclimb me, but who usually stays in the back with her buddy, the oldest guy in the group. Or it could be my buddy Hans, an incredibly fit 60yo who probably built his own log cabin.

No chance, man! Not this time! I shifted up twice and roared off at 4.5 mph. 100 feet further on I fell back to 4 mph.

900 feet.

Maybe I was looking at this all wrong. Maybe I should seize the opportunity to let it go, use this trip as an opportunity for a renewal, a catharsis if you will. Cruise up at my own pace and not worry about being passed. Come back home a changed man.

1000 feet.

Ha! Hans pulls off to take a break. Loser! Ha-ha-ha-ha! (just kidding)

1100 feet.

Somebody shoot me.

1200 feet.

The summit approaches, I crest the last rise and breath deeply. The cool, crisp air enlivens me. I feel my blood surge,, triumphant. I yodel, but not well.

All that's left is a beautiful downhill. 55 degrees, 35 mph. Hmm...maybe I should have worn socks under my sandals this morning.



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Posted by: **pacifipete** | September 21, 2008

California

...is the place you oughta be.

Yes, we hit California today. Swimming pools, movie stars. Or rather, we hit Crescent City, which is a bit of a dump, and are staying at another RV park. Only five miles from one of the prettiest places I've ever camped, Jedidiah State Park among the redwoods. I was a bit put out by this until I realized that a) one of the main roads to Jedidiah is marked "no trailers", presumably because of steep roads, and b) we spend all day tomorrow among the redwoods.

Getting into Cal was fun (see picture). We were met at the agricultural inspection by a guy who introduced himself, said he'd biked across the country a few years back, and gave us each a little keychain flashlight.

The highlight of the day was watching Sir John (each of our three Johns has a nickname, Sir John is British) shovel our rice dish dinner back into the pot after it all spilled on the floor. This was first met with a shocked silence, before people started nervously saying things like "Uh, that looks fine John. Why not leave the rest on the floor where it is, next to the trash cans." But John kept shoveling it up, saying "You Americans are so easily shocked." in the end, we ate every bit.

The town of Crescent City is slightly creepy. To give you an idea, tonight at around 10pm a couple of us were sitting on a wharf drinking beer when we heard a wild snarling, splashing commotion. Across the way a couple kids had sic'ed their dog on a raccoon, and were egging him on, laughing and cheering. The dog and the coon were fighting to death in the shallow water. The snarling and splashing went on for quite a while before the dog emerged victorious. The kids moved on to torment some other poor animal. What is wrong with some people?





Tomorrow a 1250 foot hill! Aaweiiigh!

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October 2008

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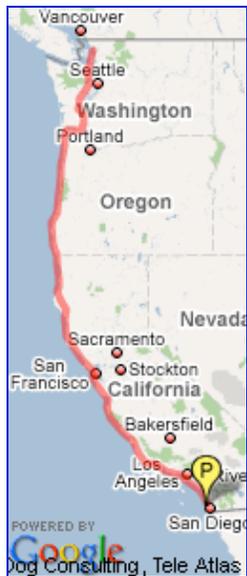
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