

## Pacific Pete Hits The Road

2000 miles down Highway 101

- [What](#)
- [How](#)
- [Where](#)
- [Why](#)

Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 20, 2008

### People...

are just bizarre.

We've so far had very little friction among the 15 people, perhaps because we have so many. The average age is 56, much higher than the usual average of about 46. However, most are a lot of fun.

Bill, the ex-marine, tells a story that happened right before the tour. He has some sort of heart arrhythmia; when it happens he has to have his heart "restarted". He had problems 2 days before the tour, so he went into a doctor's office to have it done. The first thing they did was draw some blood, or try to. The nurse missed the vein on the first try. "You get one more try!" he said (his veins are quite prominent). She missed again, so he chased her out (probably bellowing) and eventually another nurse came in and got it done. Then they wheeled in the equipment to do the restart, but right before they started, one of the monitors went blank. "Hey," he said, "I'm no doctor, but I'm pretty sure that should be on!" The nurse (same one), quailed and said "I knew the monitor had a battery backup, and I needed to plug in the coffee."

And slightly differently, a feq in the group got a bit obnoxious about wanting to segregate the snorers. Not a big deal, but it's not always possible, and it could have been done less confrontationally. Our leader was a bit nonplussed, but did come back the next night with a couple boxes of earplugs, and vetoed any such restrictions.

The funny part was that after the one night where we snorers camped together, one of the guys who is a self-professed light sleeper (but is a great guy) came back to camp with us. Evidently one of the complainers had, ahem, farted loudly and repeatedly all night long...





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Posted by: **pacifipete** | September 18, 2008

## [The Calm Before The Storm](#)

Today was a fun 60-mile, 2951-foot ride. Some nasty climbs at the beginning, followed by a lot of rolling stuff afterwards. We had a headwind, but it wasn't that bad. Somehow, we had plenty of energy (see picture).

The rolling stuff was on "Seven Devils" road. Some wit had inscribed "first devil" etc on the road at each major crest. The last sadistically said "seventh devil, I think". Finally, there was a msg that read "the fun starts here", right before one of the steepest descents we have done. Indeed.

We had a potentially major problem today, one of the guys' tires blew. Tubes go all the time, but none of us carry a spare tire (of that sort, at least). Luckily, a couple of us were at a hardware store 10 miles further down the road, which actually had a cheap tire (no bike shops for another 25 miles). I donated the last bit of my cinnamon bun to Nita, who then raced back to rescue mike.



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Posted in [absentia](#).

Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 16, 2008

## [Moving on, and gadgets](#)

After one night in the marina, we decided to move on and spend our off day elsewhere. Off we went, 58 more miles down the road. We ended up in a cute little state park next to a fishing village.

Last night we unfortunately had no signal on our phones. Panic! None of my gadgets work!

For those of you who don't know, I'm blogging from my iPhone, using an iPhone application that interacts with the wordpress blog. Since the iPhone can't connect to my camera, all of the pictures you see were taken with my phone. I have more and better pictures on the camera, but no way of downloading.

The iPhone also has a GPS. I'm updating my position on the map by emailing my coords to my machine at work. I wrote some scripts that catch these emails and toss them in a database. If you click through the map, my position is generated on demand by querying the database for the latest coords.

My other big gadget is the Kindle, an ebook reader from amazon. I have about 20 books on it, currently reading "World Without End," the sequel to "Pillars of the Earth," by Ken Follet. The kindle also can talk wirelessly through the sprint network, and the NYT is automatically downloaded each morning.

I do have to say, however, thAt the NYT hasn't been much fun reading recently.

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Posted in [absentia](#).

Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 15, 2008

## [Um.](#)

Bliss is biking the Oregon coast on a warm, sunny day. I hate to be a downer, but this was not that day.

Last night was the coldest yet, and today the fog never lifted. So lots of hard slogging, topped by climbing narrow roads (some with no shoulder) in the fog. The only thing that got me through the last, long climb, was stopping for a welcome infusion of sugar and caffeine in the form of a blessed bottle of Mountain Dew.

Half way through the day I also stopped for the below meal. I felt I deserved it, but for those of you wondering how rapidly my gut is disappearing, well, I'm not totally sure...



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Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 15, 2008

## [A Toughie](#)

Today was 66 miles and 3521 feet climbing, definately the hardest day yet.

Let me describe the conditions a bit. I sleep in underwear, a long-sleeved under layer, a shirt, and my goretex jacket. My sleeping bag is rated to 40, but that might be a bit optimistic. By 3:30 or so, I wake up cold and put on my polartek pants, which I'd been using as a pillow. Then I use my sweatshirt for a pillow, which is some how less satisfactory. By then it's usually in the mid to high 40's, and misty.

Once the first zipper goes at a few minutes before six, pretty much everyone is up and moving about. By 6:20 or so the tents are usually cleaned out and we're having breakfast. For me, this is almost always cut up fruit, yogurt, and granola. We make two coldcut sandwiches each, even for the tiniest. We go through a lot of calories.

Today, we hit an 850-foot right outside the front gate. I stuggled up this in my usual place, third or fourth, and then on we went. 25 miles later we hit the second big hill, 750 feet, but not as steep. This was much more to my liking. I'm strong, but I don't do well on the very steep climbs.

On this one I quickly paced away from the lead group, feeling pretty strong through 300 and 400 feet. By 500, I was hurting, but I thought I heard someone behind me, so I pushed on. By 600 I was in utter pain. Understand that hills this high MUST be taken with a high cadence to protect your knees. This does not come naturally to me.

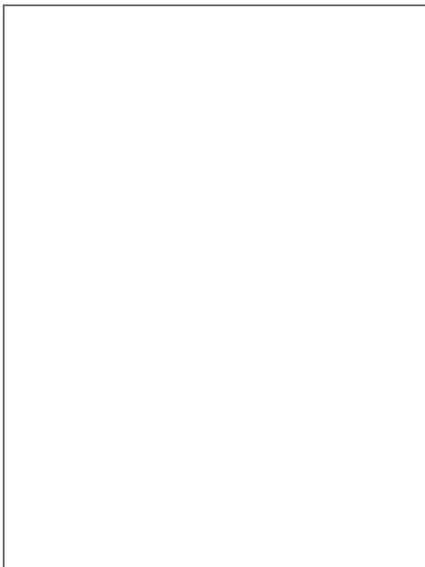
It was at this point that Nita, she of the 29 marathons (so far), noticed me behind her, circled around me and began idly chatting as she casually climbed next to me. "You expect me to respond?" I gasped out. She laughed and said something about a captive audience.

The downhill made it all worthwhile, however. A beautiful road snaking through an old tree forest. A good downhiller just needs some mass and a lack of good sense, so absolutely noone in this group can stay with me.

Oh, and by now it's 75 and sunny. No rain so far at all.

And then at the end of the 3-mile downhill was a tiny pie shop that people had been recommending to us all day. Worth the wait.

We roll into the campsite later than usual, around 5pm. Set up tent, blow up mattress, go take shower, and we gather around the tables to kbitz while the cooks finish up. After cleanup, we have a map meeting where we discuss the next day's ride (it's dark by now, and we're in our tents by eight-thirty or nine.



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Posted by: **pacifipete** | September 13, 2008

## [The Lighthouse Trail](#)

Today, one of the highlights was to be a scenic shore ride, highlighted by a view of a scenic lighthouse. However, I didn't do any of that.

Instead, I and one other went to an air museum in tenomah (sp?). It's housed in a building that is said to be the largest all-wood building in the world, something like 1250 x 250 feet long.

It used to house 8 K8 military blimps, which were used in WW2 to spot Japanese subs off the west coast.

Today, there are all sorts of planes, from corsairs to F14s to autogyros to a little plane (enchamp?) that had very nervous pilots. These guys would fly the plane for live target practice! That is, gunners would practice by shooting at them.

I haven't mentioned too much about the camps. All Oregon coast is public land, and much of it is state parks. We're staying at hiker-Biker sites, \$4 / person camping for those with muscle-powered transport. Most of it is cyclists. Right now at this park, we have the 15 ACA bikers, 2 guys we've seen before (one had a skunk in his tent last night: he was out admiring the sunset), another two guys a haven't seen, 2 women biking Seattle to monteray, and a french family we've seen three times before. They're biking from Alaska to Mexico. The adults at both riding heavily loaded recumbants, with the 8yo pulled in a spiffy trailer by the mom. The little girl hopped up next to me as I photographed the sunset. "il est tres belle, non?" I finally got out. She looked at me with utter disgust and gave me an emphatic "Non" before flouncing away. At least she understood me.



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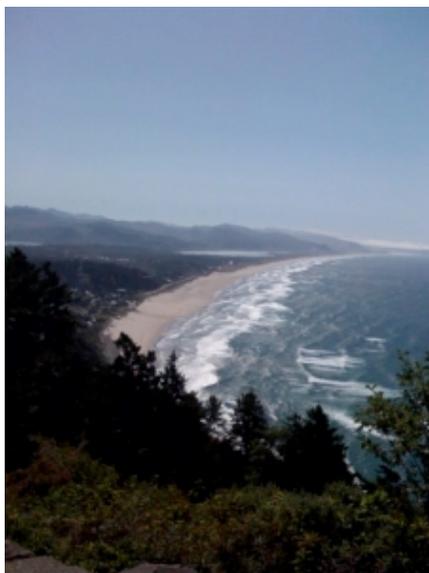
Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 12, 2008

## [Oregon Coast](#)

Today we really started traveling the coast. Several high climbs with beautiful views.

We all agree that the climbs seem more manageable than when we started, but it's not clear whether we're stronger, or just smarter about the speed with which we try to take the hills.

On the (slight) down side, the logging trucks are more numerous as well. The truck drivers are actually pretty good about giving us space, they clearly are used to bikers. However, the enormous RV's towing SUV's are a different story.



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Posted by: **pacifipete** | September 11, 2008

## [Pancakes, racoons, and more](#)

Today was a rest day, so not much happening. Did laundry, walked the beach, and tried to swim. But it was cold! Also quite shallow far out, so you have to wade quite a ways, always being splashed by frigid waves. Almost worth it! I'll try again in a week.

A few notes on other days. Coons! Way back on the first night several of us crowded around to see a whole family of the cute varments. That night, they ate all of the next day's lunch. The next day we hung the food about four feet off the ground. I was woken by the sound of lots of mewling and chittering, and the occasional slap of meat against a counter. I got out of the tent to find eight (8) racoons trying to get the food. One would launch himself at the hanging bag, biting anything he could, and then fall hard on the dirt.. They'd already gotten most of our energy bars and half our bread. I charged into them but they didn't move. They just crouched down in a semi-circle around me, their eyes glowing. Not cute. I finally chased them off by throwing handfuls of pine needles.

Yesterday, after climbing the big hill, my powerfull pistons pumping like some mad, raging metronome, my long downhill deposited me in front of a log-cabin'ish diner that screamed "pancakes" at the world. Not being one to ignore such a cry, I stopped, chatted w/ the waitress, and put a few pancakes out of their misery.

Bill, easily the funniest 60yo ex-marine I've met, sees my bike, stops in to see what I'm eating and bellows, "waitRESS", give me a stack of them flapjacks!" We tipped well.

The picture is of an old wreck on the beach (the Peter Ireland?). You can see the bow, and all three mast casings. The bulk of the boat is there, under the sand.



#### [4 Comments](#)

Posted in [absentia](#).

Posted by: **pacificpete** | September 10, 2008

## [Oregon!](#)

Made it to a new state today! Good-bye Washington.

The day started w/ a sprint for the 8 am ferry (after breaking camp, preparing breakfast, etc.). We had 4 miles and 10 minutes to go, really no chance unless they left late. Time was so tight none of the other five got their rear blinkies on. This was a problem, as the fog was thick, trucks common, and we really only had a vague idea where we were going. Nonetheless, we all made it, though the ramp was already 6 inches up when the last guy made it.

Then the big hill, where I hit the pavement for the first time. I snagged the guardrail w/ a pannier, the bike turned and down I went. No damage except my pride (I loudly declared that I had decided to stop in order to take off my jacket) and my front tire got knocked out of kilter a bit. I didn't figure out that my front brake was rubbing for 20 miles.

I communed with the sea lions! 100's of them on the wharf. I walked up to about four feet. They barked at me for a bit and then went back to sleep.

Layover day tomorrow. I might take my first dip in the Pacific.



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Posted in [absentia](#).

Posted by: [pacificpete](#) | September 10, 2008

## [The time has come, to tell..](#)

First, I ba-kwaw'd four times today, and snorted twice.

The ride today was 60 miles w/ a 900-foot hill in the middle. Of course, the reality turned out not so severe as our fears. However, the nasty headwind and the 300-foot climb to the finish absolutely wiped me out. Most tired I've been.

Then, I had to cook. John, a brit (brilliant! Spot on!), and I were the cooks. First we had to get to the site, early, empty our panniers, and go buy \$265 of groceries, bring it back, and then cook for 15 (risotto). Luckily, cleanup was someone else's job.

We're currently camped at a marina on the columbia river (lovely water sounds). Tomorrow, we take the ferry to Puget Island, then a bridge, a nasty climb, and then into Astoria. Evidently nice restaurants and great naval museum. We close out the relatively short day by biking 15 miles out to Port Stevens State Park, where we will spend our first rest day. I intend to rest my bum.

I was payed two compliments today. The one I can relate in this G-rated forum is that my thighs were like "mighty pistons." I kind of like that, it's almost as if I were a character in one of the old pulp science fiction novels.

I had some good pictures today. Unfortunately, all on the camera rather than the phone. The first picture shows Nita, one of my three main riding companions. The other two, John (from Baltimore) and John (from London) evidently wandered off as I switched from the camera to the iPhone camera. I pull everyone on the straightaways, then they leave me for dead going up the hills.

The other picture is of a little shop where I got the caramel macchiato that powered me to the top of the big hill.





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October 2008

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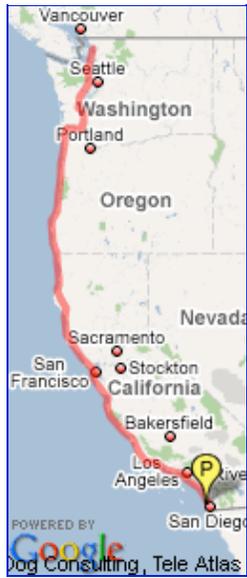
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