

Day 58 Quebec City – Rest Day

Sight seeing in the morning, had lunch on the grass in front of the parliament buildings near the old city. Good time. Dinner in a restaurant. Staying at Laval University. Had coupons for meals - they were strict on the meals. Only one juice, if eggs no pancakes etc. Small portions and not too appetizing. Left for the ferry to Levis. This note is somewhat jumbled because I am adding as I think of things. While in the old city we passed a garbage truck with a 'disco driver' - seriously, there was disco music blaring from the truck and the garbage man was doing a bit of a dance as he went down the street. Very humorous. While in Quebec City we decided to picnic on the parliament grounds. We went to a store to purchase some bread and cheese. Then realizing something was missing we went to a SAQ for a bottle of wine. As I went through the cash the attendant asked if I wanted the bottle opened!! I guess I should do something about my clothes but I was fresh shaven and I thought wearing good clean clothing. Quite humorous. (okay we had the attendant open the wine and we drank it from small glasses on the grass in front of the parliament buildings) - a very European moment.

Day 59 Quebec City – Riviere Ouelle

Rest day was yesterday and today we have a relatively short day of 140kms. We must get all our 'stuff' out of the room and into the truck prior to 0700. At 0700 the cafeteria opens and we get a breakfast indoors. For the first time we must hand our keys in to get our map.

Seemingly there have been cases where room keys have disappeared. On the road once again we leave Laval U and head towards the Old City. Fortunately I remember some of the route and soon we are on the Grand Allee heading towards the Chateau Frontenac. We get to the ferry with time to spare. After the 10 minute crossing we get on a bike trail and head eastwards. The bike path is not the 'official' route but riding beside the river is very enjoyable so we continue knowing that eventually we will reach hwy 132. The main highway is a four lane road that is south of our route thus ours is quite quiet. This is one of the best days of cycling we have had. The humidity is gone and there is no wind. Cycling just does not get any better. At St Michel (celebrating its 325 anniversary) we make a conscious decision to go into every town rather than bypass the core area on the highway. Remember that these towns are very small and very quaint. The pride of ownership is very evident - all homes are very well kept with lots and lots of flowers. This is just a beautiful day. Lots of towns with small cafes are quite inviting. There are a few rolling hills but nothing of significance and we take our time going from town to town. Just a wonderful way to travel. Riviere Ouelle (river eel) is a small town and we are camped 4 kms out of town. We have a lovely spot beside the St Lawrence River. I phoned Pauline and learned about the power outage in Ontario and parts of the US. I then watched the sunset where people actually applauded when the sunset. Once again, life is simple on the road.



Andrew and Jack

Day 60 Riviere Ouelle– Trois Pistole

Today was not a rest day - it was a 122 km riding day. But; we had a tail wind and reasonably to very smooth roads. It was better than a rest day. What a



Kamouraska home



General Store

wonderful ride. The sky was overcast in the morning then the sun shone in the afternoon. We had a tail wind of about 30kph directly from the west. Wonderful just wonderful. Phoned Pauline last night and was told all about the lack of electrical power in Ontario and parts of the United States. Not wanting to sound uncaring but it is difficult for me to get too concerned - my whole life centres around getting up in the morning and going for a bicycle ride. Life is quite simple on the road. This morning the road took us beside the St Lawrence and through farm land as we wove our way to St Denis and then Kamouraska. I have been in this area previously and wanted to stop in Kamouraska for a break. Pauline has always been fond of this area so I took lots of pictures. As luck would have it I found a boulangerie with a coffee shop just next door. While in the shop looking at the croissants and the chocolate goodies a man came in and started talking to Jack - he said, and I am not kidding, that the smell was an orgasm for the nostrils and the taste was an orgasm for the gastronomique system. Needless to say the gentleman was reasonably overweight (about 300 lbs.) We had a chuckle about that for the rest of the day. We cycled on and went through Riviere du Loup where we had a break for an early lunch, or a third breakfast. The restaurant was quite fancy so we settled for a coffee. This place had the most beautiful waitresses I saw on the whole tour; every girl was a knock out! When we got to Trois Pistoles I stopped for a minute to say hello to a Navy fellow that I met a couple of years ago. He and his wife run a B&B and were quite nice. I spent only a couple of minutes there but I was happy to do so. Finally at the camp spot my luck continued. While waiting for a shower I started a conversation with a man working on the money changer for the shower. He finished his work and gave me 50 cents for a double shower! Life just gets better. The sun is shining and I am awaiting dinner. My luck may take a turn - tonight it is the 'spice boys and they are making a stir fry. Sounds simple but you must remember this is the same group that put cumin in the rice. I must say that the boys are getting much better; dinner was quite good.

Day 61 Trois Pistole – Amqui

Yesterday was a near perfect day - sunny and warm with a tail wind. Everything changed during the night. We had a bit of thunder and lightning followed by rain. Not a lot of rain but enough to make everything wet to put away. The wind had changed and we would be having a wind in the face for the first 100 kms. Not to worry because as we left the camp (Jack and myself) a light drizzle started to fall. By the time we got to St Fabien it was raining full force. We sought refuge under cover of a patio next to a casse croute. It really started to pour. We had decided to follow route 132 today and did so. In Bic we had a couple of good hills but nothing too steep. We got past them and went on to Rimouski. There is a long slow climb as you enter the city and when we got to the top we were met with fog to go with the rain. Not too pleasant and the fog was getting thick. By the time we got back to sea level there was Hortons we had a hot chocolate and a doonut. Andrew caught up with us there and we rode together for the rest of the day. At St Luce sur Mer we rode through the town and tried to find a good spot to eat. All the restaurants had soft cushioned chairs and we were soaking wet. We continued on waiting to stop at Mont Joli. While leaving St Luce there was a lot of activity on the roads. There had been an accident towards Rimouski and a police car and ambulance went racing past. Actually the first police car hit two other vehicles just at the entrance to the town. Lots of activity. We continued on to Mont Joli where we took a short stop and I took advantage of a phone booth outside the restaurant and phoned Pauline. Continuing on towards Amqui we had a few climbs. Actually there was only a couple of difficult or demanding climbs and they were early in the ride. By the time we got to Saint Moise all the difficult climbing was behind us. Saybec was next and is the home of David Pelletier the Cdn gold medal winner in couples figure skating with Jamie Sale. Next town was Val-Brillant which is famous for its two steeples of over 45 metres. Quite an impressive sight. Finally after more than 162 kms in the rain I arrived at Amqui and our camping spot.



Bic in the fog

Tonight I had switched cooking teams with B and was on cooking detail with Andrew and Jack. We made grilled cheese and corn on the cob. It really went over well. We had mixed fruit for dessert. The cooks got into some Pernod and that probably influenced their opinion on the quality of the food. The camping spot was really nice and I had a good nights sleep. Tomorrow promises to be a better day.



Day 62 Amqui – Campbellton

Today we ride into another province. I was on breakfast duty and we made porridge with scrambled eggs. The eggs had mushrooms and

chopped onions and it was really good. Got on the road a little after 0900 but am not worried because I knew this was mainly a downhill day. All the climbing we did yesterday would give us a reward today. Also, when I got up the sun was shining and there was a tail wind. What could be better than this. The scenery going down the Matapedia valley was



spectacular. The day was clear and the temperature would be in the mid 20s. Our first stop was at Causapsal to watch the salmon fishermen. From the bridge in the centre of the town you can watch the fishermen as they attempt to catch salmon.

There is a very strict protocol and each person must follow a rotation. Watching the fishing made us thirsty so we stopped for a coffee and enjoyed the slow Sunday morning pace. Back on the bikes we continued our down hill ride - the river is continually on your right hand side and we could see the people fishing in boats. We stopped for a couple of pictures at Routhierville and the covered bridge.

Finally made the turn at Matapedia to New Brunswick and another province. We are really moving right along. Once in NB we stopped for a picture and sure enough we had a short but nasty hill to climb. We made it to camp around 4:00 NB time after a short 110 kms. This was just a great day. In fact, I think that this day will rank up there as number two for my favourite

riding days on the tour. Just fantastic.

Day 63 – Campbellton Rest Day

Today is a rest day and I will have to work on my bicycle. It needs to be de-greased and given a general tune up. Also, a clothes wash will have to be done. Lots to do on the tour. Having wonderful time and still enjoying the summer. While cleaning my bicycle I discovered about 5 cracks in the rear wheel. These were small cracks that emanated from the spoke holes. This has the potential to be a serious problem and I was not near a good bike shop. While in Ottawa Doug had checked the bike over and everything was okay - just metal fatigue I guess. I will now have to pay attention to the pot holes and try to get a new wheel as soon as I can.

Day 64 – Campbellton – Petit Rocher

Today is just another wonderful day. We decided to have a later breakfast, today it would start at 0730 rather than 0630.

We had porridge and french toast. Quite tasty but I must confess that I am getting tired of fried foods. After breakfast

Andrew and I left camp on our way to a coffee and await Jack. Jack was on breakfast duty (he is doing a breakfast duty so that he can have a day off in Charlottetown when his wife visits) and would not leave the camping spot for some time. We stopped at a coffee shop and I had the house blend and toast. Quite good, real home made bread with marmalade too. We waited and waited and finally Jack showed. At 1000 hrs we were still in the coffee shop - obviously this was going to be an easy day. We had to ride just 100 kms and there was a tail wind.

Things do not get better and we were very relaxed. We cycled on to Dalhousie where we saw a Tim Hortons and stopped for a donut. While in there George and James showed up. Mel went by in the truck and gave us a honk. She said all the people were wondering why she was honking but she knew we were having a break. Leaving Dalhousie turned into a bit of a challenge. There are hills, and I mean steep hills. We looked around and followed Bud's directions to keep the climb to something



My bicycle with the Gaspé in the background

reasonable. Don Peddie mentioned a wall in Dalhousie and I can assure you that you can not get out of town

without a climb. Finally we left town and had a pleasant cycle to camp. You have to love a short day with a tail wind.

Dinner was pasta with a tomato sauce - a bit bland but I enjoyed it. We had planned on purchasing wine for the occasion but the wine store did not arrive prior to the camp. Even though it was a short day nobody was willing to go the extra distance to the wine store. At these times I miss Quebec where wine is sold on every corner. Still loving the tour and am

concerned that the end is near albeit another two weeks. My wheel is okay but the cracks are getting just a little longer each day.

Day 65 Petit Rocher – St Louis de Kent

This was just another great day. We had a bit of a tail wind and the weather was just wonderful. I was riding with Jack and Andrew. We took our time and had our first break at Bathurst. After Bathurst the route goes through or overland to Miramichi, formerly known as Chatham. This was a lovely ride with rolling hills that kept things interesting but not too difficult. All in all it was enjoyable with lovely scenery. We stopped at the side of the road and had a sandwich then proceeded to Miramichi for a later lunch. The bridge crossing the river is quite impressive and we were able to get some good pictures from the top. I noted a couple of riders who rode their bikes over the bridge on the roadway. There was little to no bicycle path and I thought this was a poor decision. We had a lunch in the park beside the waterfront. This turned out to be a very nice spot to eat and enjoy the scenery. After lunch we started out again enroute to Saint Louis de Kent. The camping ground here was really nice. The washrooms clean and lots of showers with warm water. I did a washing and got everything to dry before nightfall. Now, the big event was supper. We had lobsters and they were great. I was able to get two and really enjoyed them. After dinner we decided it would be easier to just go straight to the shower and clean up. Nice and easy. Just a great day.

Day 66 St Louis de Kent – Murray Beach

Jack has decided that he will cycle to PEI today and meet his wife rather than cycle to Murray Beach and spend the night then go on to PEI with the rest of us. I start out with Andrew and we cycled to Richibucto with the morning traffic. Leaving Richibucto we notice a Tim Horton's but decide to go to the next one rather than take a stop too early in the day. This proved to be a bit of a mistake because the next Tim Horton's was at Bouctouche and we had to wait another hour before our break. Finally getting there we had to go a bit out of our way but it was worth the extra kms. After the break we followed the ocean front and really enjoyed the scenery. The ride was flat, the sun was shining and it was beautiful. We took our time and enjoyed the day. Then next stop was to be at Shediac, the home of the big lobster. We stopped and took a picture or two. Really tacky but the kids were enjoying climbing around it. We decided to have a bit of lunch there so another stop was in order. After lunch we motored on, I like to pick up the pace a bit after lunch and did a bit of a spurt, but not for too long. Afterwards we just took our time and enjoyed the day. Of note today was the number of times that I passed Judy. I passed her 6 times today!!! Talk about the tortoise and the hare. The last time I passed her I had about 15-20 kms left and I said that was it - I would not stop again. The campground at Murray Beach is situated on the edge of a cliff from which you can see the Confederation Bridge. This is just another beautiful camping spot. NB seems to have lots of these campgrounds. After dinner there was a lovely sunset - what can I say - just another great day. Tomorrow we go to yet another province.

Day 67 Murray Beach – Brackley Beach

Province number 8 - we took the shuttle to PEI. Took our time getting up this morning and had a leisurely ride to the shuttle pick up area approx 16 kms from the campgrounds. The new Confederation bridge does not allow bicycles or pedestrians to cross, thus we had to use a shuttle service provided by the company that operates the bridge. Once at the shuttle area it was a hurry up and wait scenario. Finally the shuttle driver arrived and we loaded our bikes on the trailer.



Quite the experience. When we got to the other side - PEI we did the tourist thing and visited all the interesting shops and exhibits at Borden. They have really done a nice job and there is lots to see. After a second breakfast we started towards our destination of Brackley Beach.

For those that might be interested, there are hills in the centre of the island, in fact it is quite hilly and we spent a rather tiring day climbing the hills. Finally into camp only to find the showers were a 3 km ride away, and when I got there they were crowded with adults and a mass of children. Considering that for the past months we have been only adults on the tour and we spend our time outdoors in the quiet this was quite a shock. Also, the showers are used by many beach users and were very busy. Finally, after a cold shower I went back to the camping area to start cooking dinner. We had a tomato, mushroom, onions, garlic and ginger concoction. Pork chops were added to the mixture and sort of stewed - it turned out very good.

Day 68 Brackley Beach Rest Day

Rest day. Woke to the sound of rain - it was raining fairly hard. Oh well, rest day so I just waited for the rain to stop - sure enough around 0800 the rain stopped and I got ready to go to Charlottetown. Now I have been to Charlottetown many times, but this is the first time to cycle there. It is about 25kms from the campgrounds, and it is

hilly. Oh well off I go with Andrew. We finally get there and find a spot for breakfast. Afterwards I look for a bicycle shop. I have a problem. Since Campbellton I have noticed cracks in my rear wheel. There are hairline cracks emanating from the spokes going outwards for about half of the distance between the spokes. They appear to be increasing in distance by about a millimeter or two each day. I know I have a problem but am not too sure what to do, nor have there been any cycle shops enroute. Today I am lucky. I go to a cycle shop and they do not have any wheels the size I require so I go to another shop. This time it is MacQueens and the owner is Danny and he checks out my wheel and then offers some solutions. He has a couple of wheels but they are not the same quality as the one that I now have. I explain that I must cycle an additional 1000 kms and need a good wheel. He then goes to his supply of new bicycles and takes a wheel from a new bike and installs it on mine. Meanwhile Andrew is waiting for me and Danny offers the use of his computer(s). He is a really nice person and I am very pleased with the new wheel. (the reason for the failure is not known but it did have close to 20,000 kms of wear and tear). If in Charlottetown try MacQueens on Queen Street, you will not be disappointed. New wheel (same tire and components) on the bike we now look for a spot for lunch. We end up in the Charlottetown harbour at a patio restaurant which is attached to the Charlottetown Yacht Club; and there is a wedding taking place on the grounds in front of the restaurant. What a wonderful day- plus my bicycle is now running much smoother. The wheel must have been out of round and out of true. I am happy and looking forward to the upcoming days.

Day 69 Brackley Beach – Lower Barney River

Today we left the province of PEI and made our way to NS via the Wood Islands ferry. The morning got off to a good start even though Andrew and I were on breakfast. Went down the road towards Charlottetown and met Jack on the road - perfect timing. We continued on to Charlottetown for coffee. Then came the ride to the ferry - we had left lots of time and had no difficulty making the 1330 ferry crossing. The crossing took 75 minutes and we sat inside, there was lots of wind and rain outside. We were fortunate and dodged the rain all day. Stopped for a pizza at New Glasgow. I continued on with James' camelback. He left it in the pizza place and I brought it to him, of course he noticed it gone and went back to get it before he saw me, we finally got together and he got the camelback back. When we got to the campground Spicy Mike's wife and family were there and had brought us some mussels. They were delicious unfortunately the dinner was probably the third worse that we have had during the tour. A lovely sunset followed by a refreshing breeze from the ocean. I did a washing of my non cycling clothing and I am hoping that this will be my last washing. Just another week left and I wash my cycling clothes daily.



Sunset at Lower Barnev

Day 70 Lower Barney – Wycogamough

I left Lower Barney at the regular time and went for a breakfast at the first diner we could find. I had bacon, eggs, hash browns and home made bread. Really delicious. After finishing we headed towards Malignant Cove then turned towards Antigonish. This is a lovely ride with little or no traffic. Antigonish is a very pretty town and we stopped for a break. Went into Tims and met up with Mel and a few others of the group. Today we would go to Cape Breton across the Canso Causeway. This was quite exciting because it meant the Cabot Trail was getting closer. We cycled 150 kms with lots of ups and downs. The campground was very close to town and we managed to have supper at the campground (corn chowder and a greek salad) then went to Alice's Restaurant for another dinner. Had lots of fun singing the chorus of Alice's Restaurant. James, Andrew, Jack and myself enjoyed a great dinner. James ordered a side of garlic bread and then received another order of garlic bread with his dinner. We had a good laugh and James carried the bread on his bike for the next couple of days. Good time.



Cheticamp



The beginning of the Cabot Trail

Day 71 Wycogamough – Cheticamp

Today is our first full day on the Cabot Trail. The day was exceptionally beautiful - sunny with white fluffy clouds and a slight (perhaps more than slight) wind. The wind was from a rear quadrant but not a tail wind. We left the camp and made a short stop for coffee and toast at Vi's Diner in Wycogomough. After that we followed Bud's map towards Lake Ainslie. After this we followed on to route 219 towards Margaree Harbour and onto the Cabot Trail. Somewhere along this route we made a wrong turn, or missed a turn and did a few extra kms, about 5 kms. We stopped for a fish chowder at Belle Cote - it was quite good. Dessert was a consideration but they wanted \$5.00 for a piece of cheese cake - not this time. We continued along the coast and passed through the towns of Cap le-Moine and Grand Etang. When we got to the turn for the camp spot Andrew and I continued towards the town of Cheticamp for a few purchases. These were liquid purchases, red in colour. Jack went directly to the camp spot and got our tents out and started airing out the sleeping bags.

Day 72 Cheticamp – Ingonish

Today was a day of great anticipation. I had been looking forward to this day since the start of the trip. Day 2 of the Cabot trail would bring fantastic scenery along the coastline as well as mountains. The day sure lived up to my expectations. We left the camp a little past 0700 and went into Cheticamp (rug hooker capital of the world) for a hot chocolate at Tim Hortons. When we left to go north on the Cabot Trail - it started to drizzle and later rain. At first I was disappointed with the weather but with hindsight I realize that the dampness actually was a help. The first climb of significance was French Mountain - about 455 metres. The climb was not too steep but it was long. Mostly in a straight line, versus switchbacks, the climb was quite difficult. Thankfully the grade was not too steep and I actually used my



Beautiful Cabot Trail scenery

gear!!! The ride down was a real thrill. Unfortunately the road was wet and we had to be cautious; even considering that it was fun swooping through the corners. Later we took the scenic route through Neils Harbour and saw spectacular scenery. Finally got to camp just after 5:00 - tired but happy. During the day we climbed 1850 metres; no wonder my legs are tired.

second chain ring for the great majority of the climb. During the last 25% I had Michael W on my wheel, and me being just a tad older than he.

Oh well, he is always looking for a pull. At the top I waited for Jack with James and we came down together.

On the way down we saw a moose on two occasions. The second was a male and the largest moose I have ever seen. He was just huge. At the bottom we had lunch at a cafe where I had a seafood chowder that was delicious. Afterwards we left the town of Pleasant Bay and started our climb of North Mountain; (457 metres).

Fortunately at the bottom I stopped and removed my jacket. It sure got hot as I climbed. The climb was steeper than French Mountain and I felt it significantly more difficult. I was in my granny gear and spinning at a 50 cpm rate. Once I stood up to

climb and could actually put all my weight on the pedals in my granny

Day 73 Ingonish – North Sydney

Today is the last day of the Cabot Trail. There is one significant climb and that is Smokey - a long gradual climb that is not all that difficult. Going down the other side is really exciting. There are lots of switch backs and the road is very smooth so one can get a good bit of speed up. (my fastest speed will occur during the downhills in the Rockies) We managed to have a break just before the Smokey climb and just took our time. After yesterday my legs were a bit tired but nothing to complain about and the ride today is relatively easy. Unfortunately the wind does not cooperate and we have a head wind for the majority of the day. There is still one more climb, Kelly's mountain but it is quite gradual and not difficult at all; the downhill is really nice but I stop part way down to take a couple of pictures. Tonight is our last night of camping. We are staying at the Driftwood Campground and will join the 66 day group. Also, we get a treat because the staff will be cooking for us this evening. A delicious pasta dish with real meat sure hits the spot. We must re-organize our supplies. Tomorrow we will take the ferry to Newfoundland and we can have only one carry-on bag (it goes in the pickup truck). Our tents and sleeping bags must be packed separately and we will not see them until St John's. We are getting close to the end. Last night in the tent and I actually enjoyed sleeping in my little tent.

Day 74 North Sydney and Ferry to Newfoundland



Bikes on Bud's truck and trailer

re-assemble my bicycle and make my last peanut and butter sandwiches and get ready for the trip to St John's. I am riding with Jack, Andrew and James. We follow Bud's directions and go non stop to Hwy 1 (48 kms) where we have a second breakfast. Off we go again, oops James flats and we wait for him.

Off we go again, this time we decide to get off the Trans Canada and take a secondary road towards Hollyrood. While on this road we see signs welcoming Newfie Bob back home. One of the cyclists on the 66 day tour is from the area and they are having a party for him and his group - even the fire truck is there!! We continue on and stop for a hot chocolate and a donut at Tims near Foxtrap. A local cyclist comes in and asks if we are with the Tour du Canada. He then tells us he is a vet and would be willing to show us the way through town. Once again lady luck shines on us.

Newfie Dave, (his name is Dave) then takes us along Topsail road and offers to show us a beach where we can dip our tires - off we go for another kodak moment. Just great. We work our way through St John's with Dave showing/telling us all the sights. Finally - Signal Hill!!!! Not only is it a bit of a hill but it is a hard hill too. A bit of a climb to the top and finally sea to sea in 03. Wow - what a summer. I made it!

Today is an easy day - 6 kms to the ferry terminal and then onboard for the ride to St John's. Bud has a pickup truck and a trailer which will hold 24 bicycles. He is really well organized and the bikes are placed in racks on the roof of the truck and the trailer. Front wheels are removed and stored in the back of the truck with our carry-on luggage in the back of his trailer. Very ingenious. We have a 3:30 sailing and spend the rest of the time wandering around North Sydney looking for something to do.

On board the Joseph and Clara Smallwood ferry we have dormitory type accommodation. I am in an area with 3 snorers. The air is stale, the bed has a plastic mattress and I am a bit excited about the prospect of cycling to St John's in the morning. Needless to say I had a poor sleep.

Day 75 Argentia - St John's

We arrive at Argentia about 0600 hrs after a very smooth sailing. Breakfast was on board in the cafeteria. Finally getting off the ferry I then had to



Dipping the wheel along the Topsail Road



James took my picture as I climbed Signal Hill



John, Jack and Andrew - we made it!

After spending a bit of time waiting for others at the top of Signal Hill we went to the hotel to get changed and have a celebratory drink. Andrew and I shared a room, as did Jack and his wife and James and his girl friend Lisa. We had a truly spectacular view of the harbour from our room. While getting our luggage to the room we met a fellow who was attending a wedding. We asked about purchasing beer and he very kindly offered to sell us 6 beers for \$10.00, talk about good luck. Our luggage was in a separate room in the hotel, all lined up as neat as could be in rows. Very well done. We all got together for pizza (compliments of Bud) and talked about our achievements. We had invited Newfie Dave to meet us at the hotel and he was glad to renew acquaintances with Bud and Margot. Afterwards some went downtown St John's and celebrated the end of the tour. I was too tired and went to bed.

Following Days

The next day we had our presentations at the hotel with a great brunch. After the lunch James, Lisa, Andrew and I left with Newfie Dave for an auto tour of the nearby area. A highlight was a visit to Cape Spear, the most easterly point in North America. We returned to St John's and did a walk about. During the walk about we met up with Jack and his wife Vi, with all us going to a restaurant for dinner. This was another great day with wonderful hospitality being shown by Newfie Dave.

Today I am going home. After being away from home for an extended period I am quite excited about going home. James, Lisa, Andrew and I go downtown for a leisurely breakfast. Following breakfast I go back to the room and start packing. Once again I realize that I sure brought a lot of stuff with me. My bags are filled to the brim. Andrew and I decide to have a visit to the hot tub and the sauna in the hotel. What a wonderful way to relax and I sure could have used a hot tub during the summer. The summer family has gradually moved from the hotel. I have an opportunity to say good bye to some but others have already left to return to their homes. I get organized and arrange for a taxi to take me to the airport. No problems with my travel arrangements and after a short stop in Halifax I am arriving in Ottawa. When I get there I have a wonderful surprise. My wife is there to meet me as are our two daughters and our son in law Doug, then I notice my good friend Claude Paquette and his wife Suzanne are there also. I am surprised and really happy to be home. This has been a summer I will never forget.



Home at last with my soon to be retired bike
Cindy, John, Pauline, Rhonda and Doug

Final Thoughts

A few months have passed since I returned home from my summer tour. I have noticed a few changes around the house and while catching up on all the projects that got postponed during my absence I have had time to reflect on the summer's experiences. The following is a list of thoughts and suggestions on what must be one of the greatest summers of my life.

This is the Tour du Canada and not the Race du Canada. You will make it to the camp spot every night so take your time and enjoy the sights and the people you meet along the way.

I strongly recommend that anyone interested in completing the tour complete Bud's recommended training schedule. It seems that those that did not complete the 2000 kms prior to commencing the tour had difficulty with knees and other more sensitive areas.

Equipment is a personal choice but I would strongly recommend a larger rather than smaller tent. You will also need a warm sleeping bag, minus 10 degrees Celsius as well as a full length Thermarest mattress. For a luxury item I took a good quality pillow. Remember the truck carries your supplies. There are many options for bicycle choices. I rode a Mikado touring bicycle and was happy. Others had racers, mountain and comfort styles. Each has positive points. If I were to do the ride again I would take either a touring bike or a sport touring bike. I had no flats during the tour and would recommend good touring tires. I used Continental Top Touring 2000s, replacing the rear in Nipigon (I had more than 1000 kms on the tire at the start of the tour and brought an extra tire with me). Saddles are an item that can cause problems. I purchased a Terry Ti racing saddle prior to departure and started the tour with a bit of a sore and finished the tour with a bit of a sore. I do not know the answer. One of the tour riders had a very expensive saddle yet had serious saddle sores. Try to get a saddle that you are comfortable with prior to commencing the tour. Clothing equipment should cover all ranges of weather. Those of us that had Bernoulli jackets were happy with them. Others liked their choices. Gore tex socks are expensive but it sure is nice to have warm dry feet, especially the day following a rain storm when your shoes are still wet. When buying cycling shorts it seems that that quality is directly related to price and for me MEC pro shorts or pro bib shorts are the best. Do not go cheap, this is a long trip and you need the best you can buy. I had four pairs of shorts and at times all of them were dirty.

Not everyone will wash their hands as regularly as they should. To assist you in that area you can purchase hand sanitizers from drug stores. I carried a small sanitizer in my tank bag and found it helpful for eating breaks during the day. Jack brought a large container which he left in the truck and replenished his bicycle supplies as needed.

Take lots and lots of pictures. I would imagine that on the 75 day 2003 tour, Andrew and Dave each took more than a thousand pictures. I cycled many days with Andrew and he was continually stopping for a special shot. Sunsets were often beautiful yet most people missed seeing them. I remember the sun setting in Trois Pistole where the campers gathered at the River actually applauded the beauty.

The food was an area of concern with the cooking teams being somewhat uneven in their skill levels. We had some wonderful meals and some truly memorable meals. While humorous in retrospect I can assure you that at the time I was not always amused. Quantity and quality became a concern as we traveled across Canada. Another situation was the rush to get your food and eat as quickly as possible in order to get a second helping. There was also a tendency to take a very healthy first helping that would cause the people at the end of the line to receive something less. The situation improved when the cooking team served the meal rather than allowing everyone to help themselves.

The TdC is a group tour and we should all be prepared to join the group. In our group we had a great divergence in age and interests yet we still seemed to get along quite well together. The effort that one makes to join and assist in the group will greatly pay off during the tour.

The majority of the group cycles with the same people each and every day. Perhaps an effort could be made to cycle with others and get to know them better.

If you are considering the Tour du Canada – just do it.