

Biking Baja California, Mexico 2005\2006

Monday, December 12, 2005

I bought a new GPS for my trip to Mexico. I barely learned how to use it before I left for Mexico.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

I started getting my gear ready for my trip to Mexico. I piled my gear in the living room and bought some stuff I needed for my trip. Then I biked to Andrea's place so I could give her a ride to the airport the next day.

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

I gave Andrea a ride to the airport, she was headed to Maui for Christmas. I was a little late for work, so I left early that day. After work I went to Andrea's to get my bike and decided to continue using her Explorer (originally, I was planning on biking home). When I got home, I finished getting my gear ready and loaded my bike for a test ride. Then I boxed my bike and Gear for my trip to Mexico. I didn't get to sleep until 1:30 AM.

Thursday, December 15, 2005

I loaded my boxed biked and bike gear into Andrea's Explorer and drove to work. I left the boxes near my work station, so John Livingston could give me a ride with my gear to the airport the next day.

Friday, December 16, 2005

I drove Andrea's Explorer to her home and then walked to the Sunset transit center. When I arrived at the Rose Quarter on the Max, I just missed the bus to Swan Island (work). By the time I made it to work I was running late and it seemed like everyone was looking for me. Oh well! It was a busy day of work, as I worked, I also finished repacking my gear and taping my boxes closed. I left work early and didn't accomplish much. After work I had a few beers with co-workers (Tom Feller, John Livingston and Mark from Eaton). Since we spend most of the beer time talking about work, Mark was able to expensing the beer/ food. While I was waiting for food, I went to a store across from the bar and bought a couple bags of groceries. Those groceries lasted me for most of my ride in Mexico. After eating John gave me a ride to the airport. At the airport I waited in the line to check in using my e-tickets. Once I made it to the front of the line, they told me since I had a bike, I needed to wait in the customer service line. That line was very long! They ended up charging me \$50.00 to take my bike on the plane. Good thing I got to the airport so early. I boarded the plane to San Jose around 9:15 PM and slept for most of the flight. Once in San Jose I had about 7 hours before my flight to San Diego. I walked all around at the airport, my

legs were still sore from all the walking I did earlier that day (To sunset transit center, to work from Swan Island bus stop, lunch to Subway and around airports). At around 2:00 AM I went to sleep on one of the benches at the airport.

Saturday, December 17, 2005

I slept fairly well on the airport bench until about 5:00 AM. I had set my GPS alarm to wake me up at 4:00 AM, but I never heard it. It's not a very good alarm, I couldn't even hear it when I was awake. Not sure how to turn up the volume, tried learning at the bar in Portland the previous night. I was farting all night, I hoped it would stop before my flight to San Diego. The flight to San Diego went smooth and when I arrived, I thought about taking a taxi or bus to San Ysidro. In the past, I had biked to San Ysidro, however on that previous trip I took the ferry to Coronado Island and felt I would have missed a small stretch of the route from Alaska to Cabo San Lucas if I would have taken a ride. At the water front in San Diego I stopped and was told I could put my bike on the Trolley to San Ysidro. It took a long time to get to the boarder, I should have taken the trolley. I entered Mexico and went to the tourist office to get tourist papers. The way it works is you get the paper work started at the tourist office, the man stamps the paper work, you walk a few doors down to a bank and pay the \$21.00 fee. Then you walk back to the tourist office, the man at the office finishes the paper work and then hands you the tourist papers. The man at the tourist office gave me directions to the old highway and I started biking south. About 5 blocks after leaving the boarder I realized I forgot my bike helmet and Freightliner Test Engineering cap at the tourist office. I crossed the road and tried biking back to the boarder. There was a lot of traffic and I tired taking short cuts back to the boarder. I ended up going around in big circles for about an hour. I went back across the road and biked against the traffic to get back to the boarder. I finally found the tourist office and was able to quickly get my helmet and hat. After that I was able to quickly find my way to the old highway south. There are two highways south one is a toll road and I think bikes are not allowed on that road. I took the old highway which is crowded and does not have a shoulder. The ride out of Tijuana was challenging and hilly. There was one big hill south of Tijuana which I walked my bike part of the way up. As the day dragged on, I saw a motel, but decided it was too early to call it a day. I continued until it started getting late and decided to start looking for a hotel. I couldn't find a motel until dusk. It was a little run down (the toilet seat, toilet paper holder and TV were all broken). The hotel did not have a heater. It gets a little cool at nights and might have been nice to have a little heat. The people that ran the hotel lived upstairs and made a lot of noise. The hotel seemed a little run down for \$35.00 a night! I did not eat much that day (a bag of chips and two breakfast bars). I still did not have any Mexican money, should have gotten money at the bank where I paid for my tourist papers. Never thought of it then! (Daily bike miles 60.72 miles)

Sunday, December 18, 2005

I took a hot shower in the morning, it was a little cold getting out of the shower since there was no heat in the room. I started biking around 7:15 AM and had to fill my tire with air about 1 mile after I left the motel. I figured that meant I had a leak. Since I put tire sealing goop in the tire it ended up holding air until I arrived in Guerrero Negro (5 days later). I arrived in Ensenada around noon and was headed out of town before getting any money. Since I did not have any Mexican money, I decided I should head back to the Ensenada visitor center and see if I could find a bank. At the visitor center I was given confusing directions to a bank. Since it was Sunday, the nearby bank probably would have been closed. So, I asked about an ATM and was told there was one connected to the building behind the visitor center. I decided to withdraw 1500 Pesos at the ATM. Luckily the bills were all small (50-peso bills). The last time I was in Mexico the ATM gave me 100-peso bills and some places did not want to take the bills. I ended up buying supplies (water and Twinkies) before leaving Ensenada. A little outside Ensenada I came across my first military stop. In Baja the military stops are permanent posts with sand bonkers where the military personal hide behind with automatic rifles. At the military stop they waved me by, I was expecting them to search me (in the main part of Mexico all my gear was checked every time I went through a military checkpoint - in Baja I was never searched) At one point a man in the back of a pickup truck flipped me off. I'm not sure why, most of the people I saw as I was biking in Baja gave me either the thumbs up or piece sign. Most people are very supportive of my bike trips! It was a tough day of biking, lots of traffic. All I ate that day was a few chips and Twinkies. (Daily bike miles 72.93 miles)

Monday, December 19, 2005

Throughout the night I could hear a dog barking in the distance. It turned out that I was very close to homes that had no lights on. It always makes me nervous when I can hear dogs barking, I always think someone might find me. However, I've never been found when I camped near the road. There was a time when I was camped near a trail in Toronto, Canada and in the morning school kids saw me and pointed to the man (me) camped in the trees. My camp was noisy since I was next to the road and diesel trucks kept using their engine brake to go down the nearby hill. I left camp around 6:30 AM and started the day with a cold downhill. When I was getting my bike from my camp to the road, I broke my mirror off. As I was biking, I saw three kids walking down the highway and they asked me if I could spare a dollar. Or anyways that's what I think they asked, I don't speak much Spanish. One of the guys seemed to give me the mad look when I said no and that made me a little nervous. However, the other two kids ignored me and kept walking. The third kid finally followed the other two. About half way into the day I came across my first good shoulder and the longest shoulder of the entire trip, in fact it added up to about half of all the shoulder I had on the entire 1100-mile bike ride. The shoulder lasted for about 30 miles and was about three feet

wide. The shoulder ended near San Quintin. I came to a large arroyo and decided to camp there, I walked my bike about 1/4 mile through the gravel and decided it was not a great place to camp. I could see several homes on the hill and it seemed like I would not be able to hide as I went to set up camp. I pushed my bike back through the gravel to the road and continued biking. Since it was starting to get dark, I decided to camp in a set of trees next to a large farm with green houses. During the day all I ate was 2 sandwiches, an ice cream, chocolate hostess like cakes and 2 cokes. That night I heard dogs barking most of the night. (Daily bike miles 94.69 miles)

Tuesday, December 20, 2005

As I was packing up my camping gear a bus was driving down the dirt path near the tree where I had camped. The bus was loaded with farm workers, I laid low so they would not see me. I finished loading my bike and left camp around 6:30 AM. At around 8:00 AM I was hungry and enjoyed a great meal of chips, a sandwich, Twinkies and a Dr. Pepper. I went through another military blockade. The soldiers were very friendly and curious about my bike ride. They let me by without searching my gear. At one point I saw an interesting looking large dead yellow and white owl on the side of the road. The desert was very scenic and I noticed a man on the side of the road with a vehicle that was overheating. We talked for a few minutes and he asked if I knew how far to Guerrero Negro and I gave him my estimate and showed him a map with my prediction of our current location. I asked the man to take my photo and his first attempt I looked at the picture and there was none. So, I had him try again and he told me it worked that time. I looked at the photo and he still did not get a picture. I never did get a photo by the man. My digital camera takes a little extra effort. You need to first focus with the button half way pressed then take the photo. Since I do not speak much Spanish, I could not show him how to take the photo. The man told me he saw two other bikers headed my way. He said they were about 50 miles back and that it was a man and lady cycling together. He called them Gringos and said that was not a bad term. Throughout my bike ride I was expecting to see them, but stayed ahead of them. In one area I noticed people excavating the arroyo walls. I saw people parked near the road with binoculars and they told me that region had a lot of fossils. I told the lady I was biking to Cabo San Lucas and she commented on I was going for a short ride. I agreed it was not too long of a ride, only 1100 miles. I lost my map earlier that day and just had my travel books with maps. The riding was hilly, I gained about 2000 vertical feet. I had a tough time making my 70-mile quota (I was trying to bike at least 70 miles a day). All day long I was seeing great places to camp, however when it was time to camp, I could not find a good spot. I stopped and tried getting to a good place away from the road. Since there were not any real trees and the hill was towards the highway it was tough figuring out where to stay. I also noticed a lot of thorny plants and did not want to get a flat. I ended up going back to the highway and creating a flat spot right next to the road by a covert. As I was setting up camp, I saw a

few cows walking towards me, the sun was setting and I noticed the cows stayed about 100 yards away. It was a nice night with plenty of stars and it was very quiet whenever the trucks were not going passed. Since I was so close to the road, I felt I needed my sleeping pills, but I could not find them. I was still able to get a good enough night of sleep. I was far enough away from civilization not to hear any dogs that night. (Daily bike miles 70.43 miles)

Wednesday, December 21, 2005

I stopped to get supplies at a store in Catavina and there was this man that was missing most of his teeth and had long hair. The man came over to talk to me and told me he was from Missouri. Then he asked if I wanted to hear his life story, I said no. Well, he started telling me his life story anyways. He told me that he once met Elvis Presley and another time he met John Lennon. He told me he was in a movie, Stagecoach with Marlon Monroe and Merle Streak. He then told me how he invited all sorts of devices, like rain gutters, GPS system and several other items. He was telling me about all the stock he owned and how he had lots of money in Swiss bank accounts. Then he said that the US government wanted to take his money. He asked me if they could take his money, I told him I don't know. Then he complained about how hard it was getting around in Mexico. I asked him why he didn't just take a bus and he told me he didn't have any money. It seemed to contradict the fact that he has all this money in foreign bank accounts. The man kept going on and on while I filled water bottles and loaded the supplies I had just bought from the store onto my bike. When I was done packing, I said later to the man and immediately took off on my bike. Not far from town a couple of men waved me over and offered me cheese and cookies. I ended up taking with them and sharing their cheese and cookies. They told me they were from South Dakota and were headed to Bahia Concepcion to camp and Kayak. One of the men asked if I was related to Johnny Cash. I asked why he asked such a question. He said because I was dressed entirely in black cloths (Seems like a strange reason!). I replied by telling him I was dressed in cloth I wore to work before boarding the plane to San Diego. I had not changed since I left work 6 days earlier. At one point I saw a Coyote and tried getting my camera out, but it was too late for a photo by the time I got the camera. That day I went through 2 military camps, one they waved me by and the other one was vacant, but had a Hummer with the hood up in front of the bunkers. It was a hilly day at the top of a hill I looked at my GPS altitude and it read 2885 feet that may have been the highest elevation I reached on of my entire Baja bike ride. At 3:00 PM I had only traveled 50 miles for the day, I did not think I would be able to cover 70 miles that day. Things started getting easier and I was able to cover miles quicker. Once I reached 70 miles the sun was setting and I was biking past a store with a lot of people out front that waved as I biked past. I didn't want to be too close to people and continued until I found a road a little past a nation park sign (I think that's what the sign said). I walked my bike on the road for

about 1/2 mile and then over to some trees. I could see the highway in the distance, but it would have been impossible for someone to see me passing at highway speeds. It was a nice quiet spot with minimal noise from trucks driving the highway using their engine brakes. The nearby highway was flat so the trucks did not need to use their engine brakes on that section of the road. I set up my tent for the first time of this bike ride and felt I had the best camp site yet. Good thing I got water earlier that day, I had already used up over a gallon. (Daily bike miles 72.43 miles; average 9.3 MPH)

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Most of the day was flat to downhill, an easy day! At one point I saw a vulture in a cactus. The bird opened its wing and gave me the opportunity to walk very close to it and get some close-up photos. There were a lot of vultures in that area. When I arrived in the junction to Los Angeles Bay, I found a vacant gas station with a couple of trucks parked in front with several 55-gallon drums of gasoline in the back. They were selling gas out of the back to their trucks. I imagine it was very expensive, this part of the desert was a long distance from any stores or gas stations. At a tree near one of the only small streams in the desert I stopped and had 1.5 sandwiches and several breakfast bars. I started running out of water and thought I had a long distance to go before any stores. I finally came up on a store at Nuevo Rosarito. My mouth was so dry that I could hardly talk. A man from San Diego started to talk to me about my bike ride. There was no gas at that store and the man asked me how far to the next gas station, I told him I thought it was about 100 miles. I told him he might be able to buy gas from the trucks at the junction to Los Angeles Bay. The man kept talking to me and my mouth was getting so dry I could hardly talk. After he left, I went into the store and bought water and snacks. It was an easy day of biking and I biked like crazy trying to get Guerrero Negro. It was a long distance and it started getting dark, the roads aren't great and I was nervous about biking in the dark. However, I continued biking hard. I arrived at the border of Baja California and Baja California Sur (southern part of Baja California) and there was a security check point on the road. The guards let me by without any questions. The time zone changed by one hour at the border, I should have set my watch back an hour, but did not know I was entering a different time zone. After going through the boarder there was a military base and a neat whale skull. I was thinking about taking a flash photo, but decided not to because there were military soldiers marching nearby. I was very close to town and continued biking. About a mile before town, I got a flat. I decided to walk the rest of the way to town and fix the flat at the campground. A man stopped and offered to help me. I like to take help when I am on my trips, it gives me an opportunity to meet local people. The man put my bike and gear in his car and we drank a couple of beers. He bought more beer and I tried to pay for it, but he would not let me. He ended up letting me stay at his house and had his wife cook me dinner. I slept on the floor using my sleeping pad. It was a very nice night of sleep. The man was a doctor and his wife was

a nurse. Their son spoke good English and he helped English/ Spanish translate the discussion I had with the doctor. The doctor was a biker and showed me his bike collection, he had a very nice mountain bike with Shimano XTR components. He also had a very nice road bike. He told me he went on a big mountain bike ride the previous day. While I was sleeping my gear and food was on the doctor's porch. He also had a dog on the porch, I kept thinking the dog would get my food. It has happened a few times before. Luckily the next day I found the dog did not take my food. (Daily bike miles 113.62 miles; Average 12.2 MPH)

Friday, December 23, 2005

I woke around 7:00 AM and the nurse was headed to work. The doctor was getting ready and gave me water and carne (beef) to take on my ride. I finished packing and then biked back to town to find out about the whale watching boats. I had plenty of time before the first boat left so I biked out to the main highway and tried finding the spot where the doctor picked me up. I wanted to make sure I cycled the entire route. I cycled a distance and noticed things I saw the previous night. I then went back to town and found the exact spot where the doctor picked me up. I thought I may have lost some bungee cords there, but didn't find them. I ended up finding them in one of my bags a few days later. It turned out the doctor had given me a ride when I was about 1/4 mile from the campground where I was planning on staying. I biked back to town and paid to go on a whale watch boat. On my little pre-boat trip ride, I biked about 6 miles. Guerrero Negro is working with the Mitsubishi corporation (salt company owned 49% by Mitsubishi and 51% by Mexican government) to create the world's largest industrial salt evaporation facility. The people at the whale boat company told me it was a little early to see the whales and that I should probably wait until my trip back north. Since I wasn't coming back that way, I decided to take the tour anyways. It was a nice harbor boat ride we saw several whales and got pretty close to them. It was my only overcast day with a little light misty rain. I only took my fleece coat on the boat ride and was a little cold. I had wished I brought my rain coat as a wind breaker. I heard other people on the boat complaining about being cold. During high season there are about 5000 whales in the harbor and it is not uncommon for the whales that gave birth to get used to people enough so some of the boats get close enough to pet the whales. Even though it was not high season we did see whales, dolphins, sea lions and Pelicans. There were also some very large salt boats and salt production facilities. The tour had about 12 people and a guide. At 46 years old I was the oldest person on the tour, I looked at people ages on the sign-up sheet and noticed most people were in their 30s and one person was 44 years old. Most of the people on the tour were Mexicans from different parts of the country. One couple was from Italy, a solo traveler from Belgium and then there was me from the USA. I talked with the man from Belgium and he had traveling around Mexico for several months. He used the busses to get around and said it cost more than he expected and was hard to

get around on the busses. He also told me he met a biker that carried 12 kilograms (about 26 pounds) of weight when he was touring. That supposedly included a sleeping bag, tent and water. The man told me the biker would drink a lot of water before biking and then only carry 2 small water bottles. Well, my bike was loaded with about 60 pounds (about 27 kilograms) of gear. That means the other person had less than half of much weight as I carried. I normally left a town with more than a gallon of water and a couple of times almost ran out of water. I guess I needed more water, when I was younger, I didn't need so much water. There was a young Mexican girl (probably about 12 years old) on the boat that was getting sea sick. The ride was not very rough, I guess some people just have weak stomachs. One of the Mexican men took a leak off the back of the boat and then had his son (about 6 years old) take a leak off the back of the boat. When he was going back to his seat, he put his son on the bench next to me and lifted the boy and placed him next to his mother. Then Mexican man gave me a nice smile and seemed to enjoy the help I gave him. Then the boat stopped on a beach and the ladies in the boat went behind a sand dune to pee. We were given a lunch on the boat, the sandwich had onions and was not very tasty. The good part of the lunch included a soda and candy bar. After the boat ride I ate the last of the sandwich meat I bought my last day in Portland. I still had several breakfast bars and 2 cans of sardines that I had purchased for my trip before leaving Portland. I was not eating a lot on this bike trip. I bought more supplies at the store near the whale boat tour shop. I then started biking south and stopped near the road to the whale watch National Park. I didn't go to the park because it was a 10-mile round trip ride on a dirt road. Also, I wouldn't have seen anything because it was too early in the season. I started looking for camp around 5:00 PM, a little before sunset. Around 5:30 PM I found a place that was fair. There was a little hill and I was completely blocked from the south bound traffic. However, the north bound traffic might be able to see me. I found some sheet metal and created a short wall so I could hide from the north bound traffic. The camp spot was very nice, although everything had thorns and I had to pull them from my cloths and camping gear. The road was pretty good that day, there was even a stretch with a two-foot shoulder. Most of the Mex-1 (main highway in Baja California) has no shoulder and not a lot of traffic. Most of the traffic moved fast, but they usually gave me room. One problem was several times cars gave me room as they went over a blind hill on the wrong side of the road. That behavior made me nervous because if the automobile were to get in an accident debris from the collision could have taken me out. Luckily no accidents happened near me while I was biking on the Baja California Mex-1 highway. (Daily bike miles 37.52 miles; average 12.8 MPH)

Saturday, December 24, 2005

I kept hearing this strange buzzing sound. At 1:00 AM I got up and tried figuring what was causing the noise. It turned out the noise was coming from the power lines. It was

my first and only overcast night with a light rain. I ended up having to use my rain flap on my tent. The next morning was my latest bike starting time, I didn't leave camp until 7:30 AM. I stopped on the side of the road to reorganize my gear. A police officer stopped next to me and was looking at me as he talked on his radio. I figured he was going to harass me, but he finally took off, I waved to him as he went by, he smiled and waved back. I finished organizing my gear and then continued biking. The ride was flat most of the way to San Ignacio. This was an oasis town and had a nice mission. I wanted to check things out, but felt I didn't really have enough time. I ended up bypassing the downtown area and getting groceries at a store near Mex-1. My bike had been making a lot of squeaking noises since I left San Diego. I kept thinking my bike might not make it, but I made it all the way to Cabo San Lucas without any more than a couple of flats. I saw another roadrunner. I saw a lot of roadrunners in Baja. I kept trying to get photos of the roadrunners, but wasn't fast enough. I ended up eating the piece of carne the doctor gave me, it was different from the meat I get in the US. The meat was brown, bumpy and had a gummy texture. A little before sunset I found a place with hard ground, room between the plants to walk and no fences. I decided to walk into this part of the desert to find a place where I could camp without anyone seeing me. It was probably the best camp spot of the entire trip. Nice quite area with plenty of stars and far enough from the highway to miss most of the traffic noise. That evening I could hear coyotes howling in the hills near my camp. (Daily bike miles 77.1 miles; average 10.5 MPH)

Sunday, December 25, 2005

The day started out the opposite of the previous day, dry, clear and I left camp very early. I started the day going uphill until I reached about 1700 vertical feet and then I came to where my Bike Mexico book said there was the biggest downhill of the Baja California bike ride. I was expecting something much worse and was at about 1200 vertical feet when I finished going down the hill. I think the mileage was off in my bike Mexico book, because later that day I came to a bigger scarier downhill. I was stopped on a hill and this man that I saw the previous day was driving by. I never talked with him the previous day, I just remembered seeing him parked and thinking about talking to him. Well, he recognized me and backed his car up to talk. He was like me a traveler and was just interested in my story. I told him about my bike trips and he told me he was from Los Angeles, California. He was 62 years old, spent the previous night in a motel at San Ignacio and was traveling in Mexico looking for a place to retire. He gave me a water bottle full of apple juice and said he was sure it was safe. I watched him break the seal on the container. I ended up drinking the apple juice very quickly and about a half hour later got the worst case of the runs I ever remember getting. I took some anti-diarrhea pills and ended up taking 3 more squirt dumps. What a drag! The latter part of the day I felt fine. It was Christmas day and the traffic was much lighter than usual, hardly any diesel trucks. When I came to the big

downhill, I used my brakes a lot and kept looking over the cliffs to see if there were many wrecked vehicles. I saw a few tractor trucks with trailers and a number of wrecked cars. I was actually expecting to see more in the canyons at the corners of the big hill. It took me a long time to get down the hill. At the bottom of the hill, I stopped at the town of Santa Rosalia and cycled through the interesting town. I bought groceries and got money from an ATM machine. I withdrew 1500 Pesos and was hoping I would get the money in 50-peso bills. In Ensenada I received 50-peso bills and it was easy to spend the small bills. Well, the ATM at Santa Rosalia dispensed 500 Peso bills. I figured it would be hard to break 500-peso bills in the small town in Mexico. My last trip I took to Mexico I had trouble spending 100-peso bills, they were too big. On the way out of town I noticed some interesting caves in the roadside hills. When I arrived in Mulegé I thought about staying in a campground that had internet, motel rooms and international telephones. It looked like a nice area to stay for Christmas. I decided not to stay there because my Bicycling Mexico book recommended bypassing Mulegé and going to the nice beaches in Bahia Concepcion. It seemed like I needed a nice place to stay, but I continued anyways. I saw another roadrunner that day, lots of them in Baja California. The sun was setting as I finally made it to the first campground in Bahia Concepcion, Playa Santispac. I figured I would stay there and it cost US \$7.00 a night. I ended up paying 50 pesos, since I did not have US dollars handy. I was having trouble figuring out where to set up my tent, most of the water front spots were taken by RVs. I found a nice spot between an RV and temporary camp building. I set up my tent there and a man in his 50s from Alberta, Canada welcomed me. He told me he had camped at that spot the previous night and it was a nice spot. He was there for the summer and he introduced me to his friends from Canada that was staying in the RV next to my tent. I had a great Christmas feast. I had 2 sardine sandwiches, tostado chips, chocolate Twinkies and a coke, on this trip I normally did not eat before going to sleep. It was a nice night and I enjoyed the water front campsite. There were people nearby partying until late at night. I wanted to visit, but thought it was a family event. (Daily bike miles 84.49 miles; average 10.1 MPH)

Monday, December 26, 2005

I had a very nice view of the water from my tent and since I liked the camp area, I was in no hurry to leave. I could hear sea lions in the background and the water was as smooth as glass. Beautiful morning! The bike ride along Bahia Concepcion was very scenic with several nice campgrounds and beaches. Most of the beaches were private beaches with campgrounds or motels. As I biked, I kept thinking I would find a place to get water near the road. However, all the stores required biking down hills to beachside shops and no guarantees they would be open. After leaving the Bahia Concepcion area I was expecting to follow the coast and see more stores. However, I did not see any more stores and didn't have much water. I started rationing my water

and thought I might need to flag someone down to get more water. I saw a car parked on the side of the road and decided to ask them for water. I went over to the family and the man driving had actually pulled over to see if I needed anything. He was a biker from the San Diego area and was taking his mother to her home in Baja California near La Paz. He gave me a sealed 1.5-liter bottle of water. I offered to pay him, but he would not take my money. The water he gave me was just enough to easily get me to Loreto. The man told me that he was going 75 MPH and cars were flying past him. The speed limit was 60 KPM (close to 40 MPH) and I kept thinking people were going slow, I guess I was wrong! When I arrived in Loreto I saw a motel, the Duve Coral that looked expensive and continued biking. About 1/4 mile later I realized I was leaving town and that was the only motel. I returned to the motel and spent the night. I ended up walking around town. At one point I walked around a car backing up with a dog barking in the road. At that point a small truck came zooming by and honked as it came very close to hitting me. I went back to the hotel snacked and then went to a store to get beer. I noticed the lady at the hotel was using the Internet and asked if there was internet available for me. She let me use her terminal and I checked my e-mail. It was the first time I had checked my e-mail since arriving in Mexico. I was expecting to get an e-mail from Andrea telling me where her cousin Jeff lived. The plan was to meet Andrea between La Paz and Cabo San Lucas at her cousin Jeff's place. Neither of us are very good at planning things out and she was not able to get his address before I left for Mexico. The plan then changed to she would e-mail me with directions to her cousin Jeff's place when she got the directions. Well, at that point I was not too worried, I would still have a great trip without finding her. Although I was hoping I could find her! That night I was hungry and ate more food than I had eaten any other night of my trip. (Daily bike miles 72.33 miles)

Tuesday, December 27, 2005

It was a noisy motel, lots of dogs, roosters and loud humans nearby. I even found a big cock roach in my room in the morning, overall, the motel was nice and clean. I woke up well before sunrise and took my time getting ready, I had a tough day ahead! I turned on the TV and noticed that the same shows that were on the previous night were on again. I was ready to leave the hotel about 40 minutes before sunrise. I didn't want to bike before daylight, so I tried to go back to sleep. I could not get back to sleep and finally decided to leave the motel. It was a nice morning ride, but I knew the big uphill was coming. I arrived at the store in Ligüí to get supplies, according to my Bicycling Mexico book it was the last stop before the biggest uphill I would encounter on this ride. About 2 miles south of Ligüí the big uphill started. It was a step hill and I walked my bike part of the time. One of the times when I was pushing my bike up the hill a trucker signaled me to start riding, I think he thought I was being lazy. I was anticipating a much longer hill. The first 3 miles was very steep and then it was a less steep uphill. Towards the top it became hilly. It looks like the highest elevation I

reached was only about 1380 vertical feet. As I was biking a man stopped so his daughter could get a photo of me, so I turned around and talked with him. I let her get some photos and then had her take a photo of me with her father. The man was from Los Angeles, California and was headed to Ciudad Constitución to meet his cousin. The man was probably in his late 30s and had never met his cousin in Ciudad Constitución. The man offered me water, I took the water since it was nice and cold. I really didn't need the water, but I figured we were having a good conversation and it seemed like a good jester that he wanted to fulfill. After drinking the water, I finished the big uphill and then it started getting flat to slightly downhill for a long distance. The downhill was so gradually that I was not real sure I was going downhill and after about 50 miles I dropped a little over 1000 vertical feet. In Ciudad Insurgentes I called Andrea to see if she could tell me where her cousin Jeff lived. It seemed like she wanted to talk for ever and I wanted to continue biking and find a place to stay before it got dark. I kept thinking how the man had told me the previous day that some the cars are probably traveling over 100 MPH. It did seem like people were driving a little crazy and knowing the speeds made me a little extra nervous. However, the cars gave me room and as long as I tried staying on the 3-inch shoulder it was not too dangerous. I looked in my Camping Mexico's Baja book and found that there were 3 campgrounds and motels in the next town, Ciudad Constitución. According to the book the first campground was the nicest and most expensive. Since the price was not much different and the sun had just set by the time, I arrived in Ciudad Constitución I decided to stay at the first campground. The people that ran the campground had just bought the campground a couple of months earlier and the price for camping was not as expensive as the camping book said. The lady that ran the campground spoke very good English and her husband spoke some English. I ended up talking to her husband for a while. It was good Spanish practice for me and it was challenging talking with him. I think he felt the same way. He told me that he had worked on tomato farms in the USA and he even went to Spain for a couple of weeks to learn about tomato farming. He told me the company he worked for sent him to Spain and that they might send him to Brazil. I would have never expected a tomato farmer to do all that business travel. He may have been some sort of agricultural engineer. He seemed well educated, tall and strong. I went to the store next to the campground and was looking for beer. I didn't see any in the refrigerators and ended up having the opportunity to use the Spanish work for beer, cerveza. Back at the campground the owner's husband told me I could use their internet connections. The internet was much faster than at the hotel in Loreto. I met a man, Bruce, at the campground that was from Los Angeles and was in Baja canoeing with his girlfriend. Bruce told me that he once rode a motorcycle from Los Angeles to Tierra Del Fuego, Argentina. It sounded like quit a trip! (Daily bike miles 92.76 miles; average 10.8 MPH)

Wednesday, December 28, 2005

Even though the campsite was very nice it was noisy, dogs, roosters, etc. I took my time getting out of camp and left camp a little later than usual. It was a nice flat ride and I was quickly covering ground. A car stopped and it was the man from Los Angeles that gave me water the previous day. He was with his daughter and cousin that he met for the first time in Ciudad Constitución. They were all headed to La Paz for the day. I ended out getting a flat a little Distance after Santa Rita and had trouble finding my patch kit with sandpaper. It was an easy day of biking, but I felt drained. It was not a very exciting day. I saw another roadrunner and a couple of jack rabbits. I ended up finding a nice arroyo near the road and followed a cow trail up the arroyo to a nice secluded camp spot. I set up camp and walked up a hill to make sure no homes were nearby. The only sign of civilization was the highway. It was a very nice quiet camp spot. I noticed several holes in the ground, my thought was scorpions. I never did figure out what the holes were. (Daily bike miles 79 miles; average 11.4 MPH)

Thursday, December 29, 2005

I started biking early and kept expecting to see the Sea of Cortez. According to my Bicycling Mexico book I would be able to see the Sea of Cortez 60 Kilometers before arriving in La Paz, I didn't see it until 34 kilometers before arriving in La Paz. It was a tough rolling hill ride towards La Paz. I ended up seeing another roadrunner and found my first license plate of my Mexico bike ride. The plate was from the Mexican province of Sinaloa, since I was in Baja California, I would have rather found one for that region. However, I biked in Sinaloa when I cycled from Mazatlán towards Arizona and did not find a license plate on that trip. Therefore, this find would represent that trip. I saw another roadrunner! As I was entering the outskirts of La Paz, I saw a van with Washington License plates, the man in the van looked at me. I turned around to see what part of Washington he was from and found he was from South America and the van belonged to someone else. He mostly spoke Spanish and it was tough talking, since I only know limited Spanish. I was able to bypass most of La Paz, I was not exactly sure which way to go. My Camping Mexico's Baja book showed a bypass on the map and it was just luck that I figured out the route. There was a lot of traffic between La Paz and the intersection of Mex-1 and Mex-19. Also, no shoulder, so it was a tough stretch. Just before the intersection to Mex-19 a dog ran from a house and attached my bike. The dog tried taking a bite out of the back of my bike and fell to the ground. I yelled at it and it took off. The whole time the owner of the dog was watching, I don't think the owner knew what to do and it looked like he felt bad. At the turn off to Los Barriles (intersection of Mex-1 and Mex-19) I saw police and asked them for directions to Buena Vista. The traffic became very light after that intersection. At around sunset about 6 kilometers past the intersection to Mex-19 (a few miles before El Triunfo) I found a dirt road and walked along a fence near the road until I found a place to camp. It was far enough from Mex-1, but not far

from the dirt road. When I first entered the dirt road a car went by me and gave me a funny look. After that I was thinking it was not a safe place, but they never saw me leave the road and a few minutes after they left. Then I followed a cow trail along a barbed wire fence. A couple more cars drove down the dirt road and if it would not have been getting dark, they would have probably seen me. I was using my flashlight to set up my tent and would turn off the light when a car would go by. When I was setting up my tent, I noticed several holes in the ground, my thought was possibly scorpions. Well, as I was setting up my tent I notice a scorpion in the tent, I was able to get the scorpion out of my tent with tent stakes. As I was getting it out of the tent its claws and tails truck the tent stakes. After seeing the scorpion in my tent, I took my stuff out my tent and shook everything. I stepped on the scorpion, but never really saw it smashed in the sandy ground. I ended out getting in my tent and was thinking about the scorpion. I was wondering if I really killed it. I ended up looking at the bottom of my shoe with a flashlight and saw the smashed scorpion, seeing it dead helped me sleep better. (Daily bike miles 82.65 miles; average 10.1 MPH)

Friday, December 30, 2005

I heard a dog bark a few times that night, every time it only barked briefly. I could not find my sun glasses in the morning, I figured I lost them. After leaving camp I found that I was less than a mile from a house, that was probably the owner of the dog I heard barking. My first stop was El Triunfo a historic mining town, not much there other than a colorful church, Piano Museum and a couple of tall chimneys. A little further down the road I came to the town of San Antonio which required a hill climb to get out of the canyon floor. I stopped at the town lookout point, ate sandwiches and found my sunglasses in my camel back pocket. It was a tough and hilly day. I was moving very slowly. The last 12 miles to Buena Vista was an easy downhill ride. I thought I was close to Buena Vista, but could not find a town sign post. I ended up asking a man at a gas station in a dune buggy if he could tell me how to get to Buena Vista. He pointed to a building about 100 yards away and told me that was where the town started. Then I asked him if he knew how to get to the Mar y Sol condominium (where Andrea's cousin Jeff lived and where I would be staying) and the man told me it was on top of the hill on the left side of the road, the one with the blue and white wall. I easily found the condominium. It was only about 200 yards from the gas station. I arrived at the condo around 1:00 PM to end my loaded bicycle portion of my Baja California bike ride. Once at the condo a man was in the parking lot working in his garage (storage area) and the man said you must be Ted. I figured the man must have been Andrea's cousin and said you must be Jeff. My bike was loaded with gear and that was when I met Jeff for the first time. Jeff told me Andrea and I would be staying in one of his friend's condos and then he let me into our room. Jeff also told me that Andrea had gone snorkeling about 30 miles away. I figured it was too far to go looking for her, so I took a shower. I ended up getting a bug byte on my foot. Then

I walked along the beach for about 2 hours where I found a couple of nice shells. Then I biked up to town and then to a monument on a hill. I arrived back at the Condo around the same time that Andrea got back from Snorkeling. Jeff and Kimberly made us dinner that night. (Daily bike miles 43.14 (38.14 with gear) miles; average 9.1 MPH)

Saturday, December 31, 2005

Andrea and I woke around 8:00 AM, most of the day was spent lounging around. We went snorkeling in front of Jeff's condo and saw lots of colorful tropical fish. The water felt cold after being in it for about a half hour. I drove Jeff's quad (motorcycle with 4 wheels) with Andrea on the back to Punta Pascadero hotel. It was a long ride on a narrow dirt road, with major pot holes. The good thing is there was almost no traffic on the road. We had a couple of drinks at the outdoor bar at the hotel. It was a very nice setting and at the nearby beach we found a few small shells. On the way back to Jeff's we stopped at another beach and found several small sea shells. We also took several photos of very nice ocean side homes, most of these homes were probably owned by wealthy USA citizens. The houses were too nice and expensive for the Mexicans. The average salary for ordinary Mexican is about \$25.00/day. After returning to Jeff's place, we got ready for a New Years party. Most of the people that lived in Buena Vista from the USA seemed to be friends. It seemed like most of the people from the USA that lived there had been living there for between 2 and 5 years. We went to the store in Los Barriles and bought wine for the New Years party. The people that had the New Years party had a very nice house on the beach, they owned several adult toys, a Hummer, boats, etc. Jeff was invited to the party and took us. The house was very nice and they had Mexican butlers serving food and the bar was loaded with drinks. They had a roast pig and lots of other good treats. I had bought a miniature bottle of Tequila with a worm in it and drank all of it including the worm. That was the first time I ever swallowed the worm at the bottom of the tequila bottle. I've sort of always wanted to try it. I heard it was like a drug, but it didn't seem to affect me. I think the way it works is if you drink a large bottle by the time you get to the worm your very drunk! The man that was having the party paid for everything, he must have had a lot of extra money. By Midnight most people were already gone from the party. We went to sleep right after we returned from the party. (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Sunday, January 1, 2006

We woke up at about 6:30 AM and got ready to go fishing with Jeff. He has a boat and goes fishing about once a week. He invited us to join him and it was a nice morning in the water. We saw pelicans and big schools of dolphin. We saw two of these schools with a couple hundred dolphins each. These were the biggest schools of dolphin I had ever seen. Supposedly the tuna are often near the dolphin schools. One

of the schools had large dolphin and Jeff said the tuna normally hang out in the school with smaller dolphin. The second school of dolphin had smaller fish and we were expected to catch a tuna near the school. We did not have any luck. After about 3 or 4 hours of trying to catch fish, we went back to Jeff's place and never caught a single fish. Jeff said he hardly ever gets skunked, oh well he did this time. He was definitely trying, he kept changing lures and we bought live bait (small fish from a Mexican in a boat) for fishing. I spent a lot of time trying to keep the live bait from dying, but some of them died anyway and some of them we used as bait. Nothing worked, no fish! When we returned to Jeff's place, we ate lunch and then drove to the lighthouse beach area. The road was sandy and only one lane, I was not sure what we would have to do if we came across a vehicle going the other direction. No room to turn around and too much sand next to the road. Luckily, we didn't have to find out. I guess we or the other vehicle would have had to back up a long distance while staying centered in the rutted road. The beach at the lighthouse was where we were told we could find lots of sea shells. Well, there were a lot of standard boring shells, but only a couple that were worth keeping. The beach near the Punta Pascadero hotel (from our quad ride the previous day) was a much better beach for finding interesting shells. After leaving the beach we saw this girl on a quad that looked stranded. We stopped to help her and found her quad was stuck in reverse. I had the same problem when I was using Jeff's quad and by rocking the quad while playing with the shifter, I was able to get it out of reverse. She was able to go back to her motel and we headed off. The next stop was the Punta Colorada hotel and we went to get a drink at the beach side bar. It was a very nice setting where we watched the sun set. I went to pay for our drinks and the bar tender told us the lady at the bar paid for our drinks. It was the lady that we helped get her quad running. I insisted that we paid for our drinks but the bar tender told us no and turned away. I guess she really wanted to pay for our drinks. I think she must have been very happy to get help, I was just trying to be nice and definitely didn't want her paying for our drinks. Oh well, we got free drinks! As we were leaving the hotel Andrea went to the restroom. As I was waiting for her, I met this man, Carl, from San Francisco and he told me how he got some sort of trogon on his work computer. Somehow the trogon allowed someone to access his Wells Fargo bank account and withdraw \$12,000 US dollars. All this happened right before he left for his vacation to Mexico. Carl told me he was not sure how he got the trogon and that he was taking all the precautions. A little scary, hu! Then Carl told us that he and his girlfriend were staying at a motel near Jeff's place, Rancho De Buena Vista. Carl invited us to come visit him while we were in town. After the motel we went back to Jeff's place and then went to dinner. Since Jeff and Kimberly gave us a place to stay, we took them out to dinner. It was a fair dinner and cost me about \$110.00 for dinner. Mexico is not cheap, like it used to be! (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Monday, January 2, 2006

We woke about 8:00 AM and drove over to the main motel on the beach at Los Barriles. Andrea and Kim (Andrea's cousin's girlfriend) ended out getting messages at the motel. I walked around on the beach and bought postcards in the motel stores. After Andrea's message we went walking on the beach and a real low flying plane (altitude about 50 feet) flew over the beach in front of the hotel. Seemed a little strange, in the USA you would not be able to fly that low without some sort of citation. A man cleaning a boat commented about how the man in the plane was loco (crazy). I ended up talking with the man for a while and he offered me free fish that we could cook. He also offered to give us a boat ride, but I'm not sure if that would have been free. The man was a local (Mexican) worker and he was cleaning the boat for its owner. We walked back to Jeff's place at Mar Y' Sol condominiums. We ate lunch and then went with Kimberley and a few of her friends to the nearby hot springs (near Santiago, Mexico). The hot springs was accessed by going on small unmarked dirt roads to a house. At the house you give the owner a few dollars for each person that goes to his hot spring. On the way to the hot springs there was a big enclosure with pigs. The mother pig had about 10 baby pigs, we tried getting photos but the light wasn't good for me with my limited camera skills. After the hot springs we went back to the condominiums. Jeff and Kimberly had dinner with some of their clients (They were selling real estate). Andrea and I went to the place (Rancho De Buena Vista) Carl that we met the previous night told us he was staying and had a great dinner. The dinner in his motel was served country style. Everyone sits down at the same table and the man running the place served chicken, potatoes, beans and other tasty items. The parts of the meal came on a plate with several sample (pieces of chicken or whatever) and everyone would scoop what they wanted off the plate in the center of the table. They would place the food on their own plate and eat if from there. We didn't see Carl at the dinner, he told us they always ate their meals at the motel. As Andrea went to the restroom I ran into Carl. He told me he went to the meal early (We showed up about half way through the meal) and that they were about to call it a night. Then he went and found his wife. They had a drink with me and Andrea. Carl told us that he and his wife had been going to the Buena Vista area every year for the past 15 years. (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Tuesday, January 3, 2006

We used Jeff's quad and went back to the Punta Pascadero motel. Then we went snorkeling at a beach near the hotel, it was nice (several fish, but the water seemed too cool) and we found several small shells on the beach. That night Kimberly and Jeff had us over for dinner (we were still staying in the condominium under them - the person that owned that condo was gone and let Jeff use it for free). They made potatoes and beef. It was a great meal. (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Wednesday, January 4, 2006

We went to La Paz with Jeff and Kimberly. It was nice visiting the town of La Paz. Andrea and Kim spent most of their time in not very interesting women's clothes stores. I walked along the beach and found a few fair shells. I was surprised to find anything since the beach was in the downtown part of La Paz. There was only one small beach, about 300 feet long with shells. The rest of the La Paz beach area had little to no shell fragments. When we returned to Jeff's place, we got ready for the evening. Jeff took us to one of his local friend's ocean front homes. The house was very nice and the man that owned it was a retired airlines baggage person. It sounded like he had a tough career, but he worked there long enough to get a great retirement. His house was very nice and it didn't sound like he had a ton of money. He told me the house was left to him by his wife's mother. The house was built very sturdy, he told me he went through hurricanes in the house. I asked how much he had to pay for property tax. He told me it was about \$300.00/year and then about another \$300.00/year to the Mexican government to keep his land (sounds like a total of \$600.00/year - which is less than a third of what I pay and my house which is not even close to as nice as his house). (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Thursday, January 5, 2006

I woke up around 7:00 AM and started biking to Cabo San Lucas. I told Andrea that I would be at the tourist office in San Jose Del Cabo around noon (I think that is the time - not in my notes). As I was biking, I started wondering if I would make it to San Jose Del Cabo on time. When I originally gave Andrea a time, I estimated it based on the distance I believed it was to San Jose. That estimate was due to me remembering a road sign (I saw it the first day in Buena Vista when I biked a little past the monument) to Cabo San Lucas. Well after biking about 10 miles past the sign I saw on my first day, I saw another sign that said I needed to go about 20 miles further than I expected. Well, I kept biking and the next sign was back to my original distance. Then I felt I would have no trouble making it on time. I saw some neat cactus and Mexican eagles on my ride. I tried getting photos of the eagles, but they were moving and hiding too much for my camera skills. I continued biking and the next sign showed that I had to go 20 miles (like the second sign) further than I originally calculated. I was making good time and I figured I might be able to make it even if the mileage was longer than expected. I had a tough time figuring things out when I arrived near San Jose. Most of the ride to San Jose was easy, not much traffic and no shoulder as I entered town there was more traffic and a shoulder. There was a sign to the airport well before I came to the downtown area. I tried calling Andrea to tell her to bypass San Jose, but all I did is left messages on her phone, Kimberly's phone and Jeff's phone. Since I did not get hold of anyone I continued and looked for the visitor center. I saw a sign to the historic downtown area and checked it out. It turned out to be near the visitor center where I told Andrea to meet me. Well, I found a phone near

where I thought the visitor center was and called Kimberly to leave her a message telling her I was in San Jose and would wait for Andrea there for a while. At that point I was still not exactly sure where I was going to meet Andrea and went to look for the visitor center. The Moon Handbook (traveler's guide to Baja California) that Andrea had showed the road names where I was and I saw a visitor center sign near where I made my telephone calls. As I was looking for the visitor center, I saw Andrea driving down the road. I pulled her over and we found a nice parking (we were lucky) spot near the center of downtown San Jose. We walked around and bought some souvenirs. Andrea stayed in San Jose for a little while and I continued biking to Cabo San Lucas. The ride was easy to Cabo, the road had 2 lanes of traffic and normally had a shoulder to bike on. About half way to Cabo San Lucas Andrea caught up to me and she pulled over. She then continued and found the hotel. Andrea had reserved the hotel that day while I was biking to San Jose. I knew where to go, but still had a little trouble finding the roads. I ended up having to ask someone at a visitor center for directions. All I had was road name and directions on a map I drew on a napkin based on a map I found in the Moon Handbook (which Andrea had). We stayed at the Santa Fe motel. It seemed like a nice place. Not water front, but a nice pool and close to downtown Cabo San Lucas. When I found the motel Andrea and I had drinks. Then we drove to the marina and shopped from the street merchants. Then we went to Costco and bought supplies. I tried getting a bike box a few places without any luck, I was able to get some boxes from Costco to make a bike box. That night we went out for a nice seafood dinner. (Daily bike miles 70.99 miles; average 11.8 MPH)

Friday, January 6, 2006

We went to the arch at the end of the peninsula that divides the Sea of Cortez and the Pacific Ocean in Cabo San Lucas. To get there we had to take a boat from the boat docks in town. At the docks we found someone to take us round trip to the arch (Los Arcos) for \$12.00 each. Seemed like a great deal for Cabo San Lucas! The man took us out to the Arch, told us the names (skull, Turtle, Map of Baja, etc) of some of the shaped rocks and took us next to Pelicans and Sea lions. Then he dropped us off at Lover's beach. He asked us how long we wanted to stay on the beach and told us to remember his boat name (La Champi's V R 1) so we could get our ride back to the main land 1.5 hours later. We told him that was how long we wanted to stay at the beach. We could have stayed for more or less time. I figured an hour and a half was plenty of time because the beach was very small. The beach had cliffs on both sides and was about 200 feet wide on the Pacific side and 50 feet wide on the Sea of Cortez side. It was about 300 feet from the Pacific side to the Sea of Cortez side and the beach was surrounded by cliffs. Not many places to go! When we first arrived at the beach there were only 3 people at the beach and a man on top of one of the cliffs (not sure how he got there). One guy had found a couple of nice shells and another man was selling some neat stone jewelry. Andrea and I each found a single shell worth

saving. For some reason we were told not to go swimming on the Pacific side, that side the water seemed warmer. I went snorkeling in the Sea of Cortez and was stung a couple of times by Jelly fish. I got out of the water quickly after that. There were a lot of neat looking fish in that area and I could see the Jelly fish, so I decided to go swimming again. This time I did not go to the same spot where I was stung and kept an eye out for Jelly fish. When Andrea saw my jelly fish stings, she decided not to go snorkeling. We only had her snorkel and since I was using it, she was not swimming when I was stung. Some more people came to the beach on Kayaks and asked about swimming. I showed them by Jelly fish stings and told them where I was stung. They ended up snorkeling in the same area where I was stung and no one else was stung while we were there. By the time we were ready to leave there was about 50 people at the beach. When our boat pulled up some local Mexicans helped us quickly get on our boat. We didn't need their help and they helped hoping to get money from us. We did not tip them. We did not need or want their help. Once back at the docks in Cabo San Lucas I had Andrea take my photo near some Pelicans. Then we paid a man \$2.00 US to get photos with his iguanas. We also walked around the shopping area. I didn't buy anything. Then we went back to the motel to pack our gear and check out. The check out time at the hotel was 1:00 PM and we probably checked out about 2 minutes before the checkout time. Then we ate on a table at the pool and Andrea went swimming. She ended up having to change into dry cloths at the restroom near the pool, since we had already checked out of our room. Then we went back to town to do some more shopping. I didn't see anything I really wanted and Andrea was spending a lot of time looking and buying stuff. I ended up going for a long walk to the Old tuna cannery and a small beach where the Mexicans were hanging out. Most of Cabo San Lucas is full of tourist and it is too expensive for the Mexican citizens. We then drove up the Pacific coast to Todos Santos. Andrea wanted to stay in the Hotel California, it was recommended by Kimberly. They did not have any rooms available, so we looked for a room at another motel. All we found was this very expensive house cottage at Hacienda Todos Los Santos' guest house inn. I think if Andrea was not into always wanting to stay at a nice motel, we could have easily used the Moon Handbook (Baja Mexico travel guide) to find an affordable motel. The guest house cost \$135.00/ night and was like a private house. There was even a private yard with tables and a big outdoor bread oven. The yard was set up as a place to have a little party. It was very nice, but I don't like paying that much for a place to stay. If that wasn't enough, Andrea insisted that we ate at the most expensive restaurant in town. I talked her out of that restaurant and we ended up going to the second most expensive restaurant (at the Hotel California) in town. It was a good meal. However, I would have preferred eating chicken sandwiches at our expensive motel. (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Saturday, January 7, 2006

We went for a walk from the guest house to try to find the ocean. We went a long

distance through brush and past a cow. We decided it was not a good place to find the ocean and went back to our room. Then we walked around the town of Todos Santos and did some shopping. I bought some postcard stamps from the Hotel California. They sold me US stamps for letters (\$.37 cent stamp - in the US you can use \$.23 cent stamps for postcards and \$.37 cent stamps for letters). I wanted the postcards to have Mexican stamps (I was able to get Mexican stamps at the hotel in Buena Vista). I asked why they had US stamps and was told that was how the post office in Todos Santos worked. I think it may have been how the Hotel California sent mail. Oh well I bought 40 stamps for \$19.37 US (Should have been $40 * $.37 = \$14.80$, I guess there was a charge by Hotel California and/or the post office). I put the stamps on my 40 postcards and gave them to the Hotel California reception desk person to mail. When I returned people that got the postcards told me they were post marked from San Francisco, California. Andrea was spending a lot of time in a few shops and I was all over looking for stuff to buy. Everything in Mexico seemed too expensive for me. I was able to find some reasonably priced souvenirs in Todo Santos, so I bought stuff to take back home. I think the only souvenirs I had bought up to that point were postcards. I like taking home at least one souvenir when I take a bike trip. Normally I buy a lot more than one thing. Before leaving our guest house we got directions to the beach and went to check it out. The beach had very big waves that curling as they reached the shore. Looked like the waves you see on Kauai, Hawaii. Our next stop was the mining town of El Triunfo and we thought about checking out the piano museum. When we found out it cost \$25.00 per person, we decided not to check it out. Instead, we drove up by the mine ruins and walked around for free. I hiked up on a hill that overlooked town and met some local people. We took photos and talked. I was spending a lot more money now that Andrea was around. The first 2 weeks that I was in Mexico I spend \$200.00 (that included food, lodging, \$50.00 for my bike on the plane and \$21.00 for tourist papers) and ever since Andrea showed up I've spent over \$500.00 (mostly food, liquor and lodging). When Andrea wanted to go out to another expensive restaurant, I was grumpy about all the money we had been spending. As I complained she would always tell me how much money I was saving by staying at her cousin's place. The truth is I don't need the nice place to stay and actually prefer roughing it. I think in the future I would like to visit people that don't have much money, they normally don't expect you to spend a lot of money. That night we went out for another expensive dinner in Los Barralies, since I complained enough Andrea paid for most of our dinner. That evening I taped together 4 of my boxes from Costco to make a bike box for my flight home. I made the box and put my bike in it. I still felt I needed more tape for my not very sturdy homemade bike box. I also put my gear in another box from Costco. (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Sunday, January 8, 2006

In the morning I walked the beach to Los Barriles and went looking for more

strapping tape for my bike and gear box. It was Sunday and the hardware store was closed. The grocery store didn't have any good strapping tape. I walked back to the condo and finished taping up my box and putting my name on things. I had to use what little tape I had left from Portland. Hopefully I will not need more when I get to the airport. Then we went for an expensive breakfast in Los Barriles, since I had been complaining about expenses Andrea paid for most of our meal. I was pretty grumpy about all the money I had spent. All I could think is my next trip I want to either stay at low end motels (or camp) and avoid going out for dinner. At the airport, I spent the rest of my money. My box of biking gear weighed 59.5 pounds and the maximum weight allowed was 50 pounds without an additional charge. I ended up having to pay a \$25.00 fee, but they did not charge me for my bike. I could have used another box, but would have been charged for it. Also, since I already had a carry on (Andrea stuff) and a personal item, I could not make another carry-on item from my excess weight. I also didn't have any extra tape if I wanted to take part of the weight out of my overweight box. The interesting thing is that most of the stuff in my gear box was the gear I carried on my bike from San Diego, California, USA to Buena Vista, Baja California Sur, Mexico. Since I was also carrying water on my bike trip, I was probably lugging about 65 pounds on my bike, that's a lot of extra weight. As I was waiting for my flight I bought a bottle of rum, a bag of chips (very expensive - small bag \$4.00 US - would probably cost about \$0.75 in the USA) and a ceramic turtle. When I arrived at the airport in Los Angeles (LA), California I was thinking the airlines might charge me for my bike, it happened the previous year when I came back from South Africa on United Airlines. Well Alaska Airlines is a lot better than United for biking and I did not get charged for my bike in LA. I had enough time in the LA airport to walk on the top floor of all 7 terminals. I also was able to walk most of the lower levels of the 7 terminals. I had to go through a security check point to get to my plane and the line was very long. I went to the gate where I was thinking my flight was and there was no sign for PDX (my destination) In fact I looked at the flight monitor and there was no flight 253 (my flight) on the monitor. A man from Loreto, Mexico (he was also looking for the PDX flight) asked me if I spoke Spanish. I told him only a little and we talked for a while using SpEnglish (English/ Spanish). There were other people looking for the sign for the PDX flight and everyone was waiting at the gate that was on our tickets. It turned out that we were at the right gate and a few minutes before boarding time the airlines finally put up a sign and told us the plane was running a little late. I talked with the man from Loreto, Mexico and showed him my Loreto photos. He told me he was headed to Salem, Oregon to visit friends. He was interested in going to Vancouver, BC, Canada and I suggested that he looked into taking the train from Salem, Oregon to Vancouver, BC. Our flight to PDX ended up leaving about 30 minutes late, not too bad! When I arrived at the airport in Portland, Andrea was waiting for me. She flew on United and left Mexico before me and

arrived in Portland before me. Anders (Andrea's son) was there and gave us a ride home. (Daily bike miles 0 miles)

Monday, January 9, 2006

I went to work about 8:00 AM. End of trip!