

Biking Australia 2006\2007

Thursday, December 14, 2006

I loaded my boxed bike and bike gear into my car and drove to work. I left the boxes near my work station, so Ed Soderberg could give me a ride with my gear to the airport the next day. That night I stayed up until 1:00 AM getting ready for my trip to Australia.

Friday, December 15, 2006

I walked to the max stop at the Hillsboro airport with my remaining gear in a backpack. I took the max to the Rose Quarters and took a bus to Swan Island (work). I spent most of the morning packing and sealing my bike and gear box for my flight to Australia. No one said much about my lack of real work. Then I got prepared for an after-lunch meeting with Ted Chu to talk about some of the bugs I found on the ICU4/4M. I ended up going for a long lunch with Ed Soderberg and Scott Ruppel. The lunch took so long that I was 10 minutes late for my meeting with Ted Chu and was not completely prepared for our meeting. Things went smoothly, but I ended up with a lot of work that I needed to quickly do before going to Australia. I was a little stressed out because my computer was not working and I needed to hurry up and get to the airport. I was finally able to get things done (Time Wizard was down all day and finally started working and I was able to get a poor document ready with my bug findings for Tom Shakina) and updated my time card. I was also getting bugged about projects that did not seem important, speedy/shifty gauges. I ended up making an error (put my holiday time as vacation time) with my time card and had to get help from IT and Ted Chu (once I submitted the time card, I was not able to change it). I was able to resolve my error with help from Ted Chu. However, after leaving with Ed Soderberg for the airport, I realized that I forgot to set my out of office e-mail and phone message. At the airport I spent a lot of time trying to save money shipping my bike. Alaska Airlines ended up charging me both their fee for shipping my bike and the fee that Qantas charged. It seemed wrong, but the supervisor agreed with the double charge and another lady said she normally only charges the most expensive charge. Most airlines charge the highest price and not each airlines fee. Another lady at the counter said I could send in my complaint. I might do it this time! I bought a folding bike hoping I would be able to save on the cost of shipping my bike, oh well I lost on that one! This time I ended up having to pay \$142.00 (\$92.00 for Qantas Airlines and \$50.00 for Alaska Airlines) to ship my bike. This is \$52.00 more than I have ever paid in the past. My flight left late from Portland and I was concerned about catching my flight for Brisbane in Los Angeles. I exchanged \$140.00 US dollars for Australian money in Los Angeles.

Saturday, December 16, 2006

I spent all day on the plane, at one point we crossed the date change. I slept for about 9 hours on the flight from Los Angeles to Brisbane, Australia.

Sunday, December 17, 2006

On the plane I sat next to a man that was from California and was planning on camping and surfing the beaches from Brisbane to Sydney. He was traveling with another man and they were planning on meeting a friend of theirs at the airport that had camper van. At the airport I was searched 2 times by security while I was waiting for my luggage. One of the security guards took my sandwich meat for quarantined. The meat was packaged and it makes no sense why he took it. I withdrew \$500A from my bank account using an ATM at the Brisbane airport and then caught a bus to Tweed Head. The man that sat in front of me on the bus looked like Paul Hogan. We talked about my bike ride plans and he made some suggestion on the routes and things I should check out. I did not want to bike through the city of Brisbane. The bus even had seatbelt that the driver made everyone wear. I arrived at the town center mall and started unpacking my bike. As I assembled and loaded gear on my bike a man waiting for a bus kept asking me questions and I was having trouble understanding his English. He was very nice, but seemed to be bugging me. At one point he showed me a big scare that he had on his hip, I'm not sure what he was telling me happened. I then cycled towards Byron Bay. I arrived at the campground in the center of Byron Bay to find them turning away people due to being full and then they gave me a site when I told them I only needed a small spot and did not have a car. It appeared they still had a couple more sites for people that did not have cars. After setting up camp in Byron Bay I walked around the water front to find a lot of night life and ended up getting a fish and chip dinner from a takeout diner. The diner charged an extra \$.60 cents for ketchup, so I decided to eat my fries without Ketchup. When I walked by a couple of parks, I heard people in groups playing large ceramic drums. Most of the people at the night clubs were a lot younger than me and I felt too old, so I did not go into a bar for a beer. I ended up with a bad headache; it might have been a light case of Jetlag. I went to sleep around 10:45 PM and slept great. The next day I was totally done with any signs of Jetlag, normally I get absolutely no Jetlag. It seems like the headache was not related to Jetlag, since I almost never get headaches that might be the only explanation. (Daily bike miles 41.81 miles; 41.81 Total Miles)

Monday, December 18, 2006

I woke up at 5:30 AM and cycled to the nearby lighthouse. From the lighthouse I walked to the most easterly point of the Australia mainland. I was not sure if the point was near the sign or at the end of the point, I hiked to down the hill from the lighthouse. I also cycled the beach road that had several cars cruising on the previous night. I went back to camp and packed my gear for an 8:00 AM departure. A short

distance from town I had to get off a curb and when I stopped my bike, I tried release my clipless shoes from my pedals. The screws were loose on the shoe and the clips would not release so I fell on the ground. Slight ouch! I had to take my shoe off my foot before I could get it unclipped from the pedal. I found a bike shop in the town of Ballina and tried getting a new Alan Wrench. I figured my tools did not fit the screws since I could not tighten them. The guy at the bike shop told me the problem was the dirt in the screw. I spent about a half hour scratching the screw clean and then went back to the guy in the bike shop and he told me to go the hardware store and try buying an Alan Wrench that I could force into the screws. The man at the bike shop was not very friendly or helpful! I then went to the hardware store and bought some new Alan wrenches. I was able to force them into 3 of the 4 screws and tighten them. The remaining screw I could not fit to the Allen wrench. I had lunch at McDonalds and then continued biking. I finished the day by finding a Caravan Park in Maclean that was full. Since I only had a bike, they let me set up camp on a small piece of grass in front of one of the trailers in the mobile home park. Apparently, the people that owned the trailer were out of town. After setting up camp I walked into town and thought about going into the local bar. It seemed like everyone knew each other and I felt I might not fit in, so I did not enter the bar. Then I went back to camp and fell asleep by 9:30 PM. (Daily bike miles 81.66 miles; 123.47 Total Miles)

Tuesday, December 19, 2006

I woke up and took a shower before packing my gear and I left camp by 6:07 AM. I ate breakfast at the McDonalds in Grafton. From the McDonalds I could see a man on a bike that was setup for touring in front of the visitor center. After breakfast I went to the visitor center and looked for the other man touring by bike. I did not see the biker and found they had no information on cycling the coast in the visitor center. I then stopped at a store to ask which route was best to cycle south, the Pacific Highway or the minor road. Two people in the store told me to take the minor road and they said the hills were not bad. Well, I took the minor route and found it was very hilly and there was no shoulder. I think the main road (Pacific Highway) would have been better even though it had a lot more traffic. I found the Pacific Highway was flat north of Sydney and normally had a good shoulder. It seemed like the minor road still had a fair amount of fast-moving traffic that came very close to my bike when passing me. I'm not sure if that would have been the case for that section of the Pacific Highway. I started feeling very hungry, hot and thirsty as I cycled the hilly back road out of Grafton. I ended up having to stop at a covered bus stop to take a break before making it to Glenreagh. I ended up eating 3 sandwiches, 4 breakfast bars and two cokes, as well as filling my camel back with water and taking a short nap at the bus stop. I started the day thinking I would be able to cycle over 100 miles, but after the hilly shortcut I figured I would never make it. I don't think I've ever done a long-distance bike ride without getting at least one-hundred-mile day. I thought I might not get a

100-mile biking day on this trip, but the next day I cycled over 100 miles. My seat was feeling very uncomfortable and I tried turning it backwards for most of the day. It looked weird, but it seemed to make my very sore butt less irritated. I tried repositioning the seat in the front position tilted down more, but it kept slipping. I finally tightened the bolt down enough to position it forward without slipping. When I arrived in Coffs Harbour, I came to Koala Villas and Caravan Park and was able to find a spot in the park for camping, possible the last camping site. (Daily bike miles 83.42 miles; 206.89 Total Miles)

Wednesday, December 20, 2006

I woke up at 5:43 AM and was able to pack and leave camp by 6:05 AM. At one rest stop I met an older couple, Tony and Helen, that had biked Europe. I gave them one of my gobikeride.com cards. They told me that they had visited Portland Oregon at one time in their lives. Tony was about 60 years old and said he often does a 200-kilometer bike ride with 3600 meters of climbing in a single day near Melbourne. They were headed towards Melbourne, so I asked if he was going on the 200-kilometer bike ride. He said probably not his time. They invited me to join them for a cup of tea and 1/2 of a sandwich. The sandwich tasted like they had onions, they offered me a second 1/2 sandwich and I said no. They insisted so I ate it even though it didn't taste that good to me. A man in a fancy 70's Charger pulling a trailer pulled up. He sat down with us and told us about his classic vehicle. We all talked for a while and then I biked on. In the town of Frederickton, I saw several people eating in their cars near a takeout pie restaurant, Fredo Famous Pies. I decided to stop and try some Australian food. I ended up getting a very taste hot Crocodile pie. The lady at the restaurant gave me a card for the restaurant. I stopped at a rest stop and ended up talking with this man on a motorcycle. He was with his son and they were taking a motorcycle trip from near Brisbane to Phillips Island. I think he was going to Taree to visit relatives that night and the next night they would stay near Sydney. Then they would go to Phillips Island to stay with the father's parents for Christmas. They told me they wanted to get a set of microphones so they could talk to each other as they motorcycled down the freeway. They wondered why I traveled by bike. I never really have a great reason for that question. It's just a great way to meet local people when traveling. I ended up giving him one of my gobikeride.com cards. The motorcyclist wanted to know why I picked Australia and I told him it was the only major continent (other than Antarctica) that I had not cycled at least 1000 miles (1610 kilometers) on. I arrived a little after sunset in Port Macquarie. I was still a little sunburned after the first day of my trip. I had been using sunscreen number 23 since then, but it was too late! The first campground I came to was closed and no one answered the emergency phone. I met a man with his wife that had already reserved spots at the campground. Somehow, they got keys to access the restrooms and codes to get through the gate of the campground. The man told me that he had bike the US coast from Canada to

Mexico. He also told me he cycled South America from Ushuaia, Argentina to Santiago, Chile. Since that campground was closed, I biked to the next campground closer to town. That campground had sites left and I got a site and set up my tent. The sign in front of the campground said it had lots of sites available, by the time I set up camp and decided to bike to town the campground office was closed and the sign said everything was full. I guess when it's time to close they don't take anyone else, even when sites are still available. Since I was very close to biking 100 miles for the day I cycled to town and ate at McDonald's. I was starting to get stinky so I took a shower with my shirt on (to clean the shirt). That evening when I returned to camp I could see and hear lightning nearby. (Daily bike miles 101.02 miles; 307.91 Total Miles)

Thursday, December 21, 2006

That night it rained a lot, by the morning the rain stopped and did not start again that day. It rained so hard that I thought it might flood. Early in the morning I heard some growling noises that didn't sound at all familiar. It sounded like what I would expect an oversized raccoon would sound like. Definitely not a dog growl! Maybe it was a koala bear! I also heard noises that sounded like monkey, since there are no monkeys in Australia it must have been some sort of bird. Later in the morning I heard the normal Australia bird noises. The birds make a lot of neat noises in the Australian mornings. I woke up around 5:22 AM and the birds were still making a lot of noise. I walk around a little, packed my gear and was on my way by 6:10 AM. The panniers were not staying on my bike. I ended up going into town and having breakfast at the McDonalds. The flies are getting really thick, the mosquito repellent doesn't help. At least the flies are not biting; they just land and fly all around your body. I could not even bike fast enough to lose the bugs, they landed on my packs and went for the ride and seemed to be able to fly at my biking speed. I was going slow, my average speed for the trip was only about 8 MPH. At one rest stop I meet a family Doug, Renee, their dog and their 2 children. They lived in Coffs Harbour and were going to Renee's parents place near Sydney for Christmas. They asked a lot of questions about my bike trip and I gave them one of my gobikride.com business cards. At one rest stop I biked up and could not get my foot out of my right toe clip, that foot has a very tight clamp and it is very hard to get off the pedal. I ended up falling over on my bike with a lot of people watching; no one said anything and just went on with their own business as I stood up. No one that saw me fall asked if I was OK. When I arrived in the very small town of Coolongolook I stopped at the gas station to ask about nearby camping. The lady told me I might be able to find a place near the river and also suggested the land behind the cemetery. It sounded like people lived near the river, so I decided to stay near the cemetery. It was dark as I was setting up my tent. Renee mentioned it was supposed to rain that night, but it only barely sprinkled. (Daily bike miles 86.42 miles; 394.33 Total Miles)

Friday, December 22, 2006

I felt like I was sleeping in, however after packing my gear I was able to leave camp by 5:45 AM. I then spent a little bit of time checking out the grave stones. A little after 6:00 AM I stopped at the Caltex gas station in the nearby town (the same store that the lady told me about camping near the cemetery) and bought groceries. I stopped in Bulahdelah and picked up some maps. I should have gotten water. A little distance down the road I noticed I was running out of water and asked a camper at a rest stop if they had any extra water. They filled up my 2 Liter camel back and I continued biking. I stopped at a gas station and these highway workers asked if I saw the guy on the skateboard yet. They told me this guy had skateboarded from Perth to Sydney. And that he was now on his way to Brisbane with a news team following him. I think the guy was planning on skateboarding the entire perimeter of Australia. I thought I might see the guy on the skateboard as I went south, but I never saw him. I stopped at another rest stop and this man drove up with an attractive girlfriend. They started making out in front of me and he was grabbing her breasts. I thought they were going to have sex in front of me. Another car pulled up at the rest stop and the man with his girlfriend then left. I stopped in Raymond Terrace for a snack and then continued biking towards Newcastle. At a park I stopped to use the restroom and a man asked me about my bike trip. He told me he played Jimi Hendrix music at bars. He also told me he was visiting friends and if I was in his neighborhood, he could put me up for the night. He said that after asking me where I was headed and told him I was looking for a campground. He suggested seeing if one of the pubs had a room. I cycled towards downtown Newcastle and saw a crowded pub that looked like it had rooms, I asked if they had rooms and they said no. They told me about other places to check out and that there was a backpacker places in downtown. I then cycled a little farther and stopped at another pub to ask about rooms, they said no rooms and told me about a place down the road. I stopped at the next place and for some reason they were closed for a few days. Then I cycled into town looking for the backpacker rooms. I found one place that was full and was told to try the nearby YHA (Youth Hostel Association). I tried the YHA and they had a couple of bunks left, so I stayed for the night. The room was co-ed and there was an attractive lady in the bunk under me. She was traveling with the man in the bunk next to us. They were French speaking from the Providence of Quebec, Canada. I ended up getting a phone card and tried calling Dave Millard's (man from Freightliners) son, Craig. He was not home, but I was able to talk to his mother that was visiting from London. Craig was going to get married in the upcoming week. I went to a fast-food place for a fish and chips dinner. I also used the Internet for 15 minutes. It was the only time I used the Internet for the entire Australian bike trip. (Daily bike miles 83.00 miles; 477.33 Total Miles)

Saturday, December 23, 2006

I woke up around 6:00 AM and quietly left my room. Everyone else was still sleeping;

I then biked around the Newcastle water front and checked the train schedule. I rushed back to the YHA and loaded my gear. I had to quietly get my gear out of the room; the other 3 people in the room were still asleep. As I was getting my last bag, I noticed the lady in the bunk under me was getting up to go to the restroom. I got to the train station in time to get my tickets and catch the 7:20 AM train to Sydney. Once in Sydney I had trouble finding the opera house. The first person I asked pointed me in the wrong direction, the next people gave me confusing directions, but pointed me in the right direction. Once I was closer, I found a lady that told me exactly how to get there. I had my GPS, but it was not clear on the map how I needed to bike. I called Craig (Dave's son) from downtown Sydney to see if he was interested in getting together for lunch. He told me that he had errands and needed to go to the airport. I could have gotten a place and meet up with him that evening. However, since I work with his dad and didn't know him and did not want to stay too long in Sydney I decided to continue on my journey. Then I cycled over to a place with a good view of the Sydney Opera house, set up my tri-pod and took some photos for the Lucky Lab and Oregonian. Who knows if either place will post my photos, I figured I can submit the photos and they can decide. Near the bridge a man on a bike asked me about my trip and suggested that I took the train to Waterfall (town south of Sydney) to start biking again. He described that part of the trip as very scenic and hilly. I was originally thinking about taking the train a little farther and starting from Wollongong. Then I made my way to the harbor bridge and had trouble figuring out how to get to the sidewalk for biking across the bridge. Once I figured it out, I biked across the bridge, turned around and biked back to my original side of the bridge. I decided I had enough of Sydney and used my GPS to quickly find my way back to the train station. When I first arrived in Sydney, I marked my location on the GPS and that helped me find the train station for my train trip out of the city. I asked about a train to Waterfall and they sent me down some stairs, then I asked down there and they told me upstairs. It was on the way to Wollongong and I was able to get a train ticket to Wollongong. On that train I talked with a kid that lived in the area and was planning on going to college in Vancouver, BC, Canada. He told me the Waterfall area was scenic, by bike as well as train. He did not seem like it was worth the hilly ride to get off at Waterfall. Since I had a ticket all the way to Wollongong and I didn't really want to deal with the hills I decided to take the train all the way to Wollongong. It was very rainy south of Sydney. At the Wollongong train station, it was pouring rain and I repacked all my gear for rain. The rain slowed down and I started biking south. The rest of the day it would pour down rain for a few minutes and then slows to a drizzle. Most of the time when it was pouring, I was able to find a place to avoid the heaviest rain. By the time I arrived in Shellharbour it was time to start looking for a campground. I stopped at the first and maybe only camping park around to find the office was already closed. A couple of ladies in a VW van showed up at the same time. They decided to call the emergency number and we were able to get the man that ran the campground to come

to the front desk. The man at the campground told us at that time of year we should call ahead to get camping. I have no easy way to call ahead and am never sure where I will end up, that approach would never work for me. Oh well at least he gave us campsites. The man must have felt bad about charging me too much for camping on my bike and he told me the only way he could give me a discount was with a senior citizen discount. I said OK and saved \$12.00 on camping with a senior citizen discount. Cool! As I walked to my campsite a group of three older men stopped me to ask about my bike journey. One of the men told me about a trip he took to Alaska and we ended up talking about Alaska for a while. The man also told me he had been on the "Top of the World Highway". I told him I believe that is the road to Dawson City and he agreed, but I'm not sure he knew for sure. I then set up my tent and took the short walk to town to look for something to eat. All the restaurants looked too expensive; I ended up getting beer at the bottle shop and a meatball sandwich at Subway. The guy at the Subway restaurant was interested in my travels. He saw my pack and asked if I was traveling, I told him about my biking and he seemed envious of my trip. Back at camp a man came up and asked how far I had biked and about my eating habits. I thought I might have the opportunity to visit, but he quickly disappeared. I ended up sitting by myself at a wet picnic table; the top of the table was partially dry because there was a covered top. Most of the table and benches were wet because the rain was coming from all directions. I drank my first beer of the trip and wrote in my journal. (Daily bike miles 29.92 miles; 507.25 Total Miles)

Sunday, December 24, 2006

I woke up at 6:00 AM walked around the beach and camp. I sat down at the picnic table to eat when a black and white Australian Magpie landed on the table. I was able to touch the bird without it flying away; I think the bird had been often hand feed at the campground. By the time I packed up I was not leaving camp until 7:15 AM. I was moving very slowly. It was hilly and drizzling. In one small town the light turned green and I crossed the road from the cross walk. A man in a taxi looked at me and then blasted his horn and called me a bad name. I said same to you as I biked off. The way he acted made me think I did not have the right away to bike through a green light when a taxi wanted to turn right. In Australia cross walks do not mean a pedestrian has the right of way. Maybe since I was on the sidewalk I was not supposed to go. I actually think the case was that the man in the Taxi was a jerk! My first real stop was in Nowra which was only 35 miles from Shellharbour, but it took me 5 hours to get there. Pretty slow! I stopped at a Woolworth store to get groceries. It was really crowded. I probably should have gone to a more expensive gas station store. Everything was very crowded in Nowra, lots of tourists! There was a lot of traffic on the Pacific highway the road was mostly safe, but occasionally the shoulder would disappear and the traffic would get very close to my bike as the cars zoomed past. A little scary! I needed to stay near the outer edge of the pavement. A lot of

people in cars either yell or honk as they pass. Some of the people are cheering me on and other are telling me to get off the highway. It seems like there are more people yelling at me in Australia than any other place I have ever biked. It's pretty annoying! I came to the town of Milton and saw a caravan park. I went to the office and it was closed. Then I checked out the caravan park and returned to the closed office. I ended up calling the emergency number and he told me to setup camp and pay in the morning. I told him I normally leave camp before 7:00 AM and he told me he is normally up by 5:00 AM. The campground had lots of Asian campers, neat birds and mosquitoes. As I was walking around the campground looking for a restroom a lady stopped and asked if I was their late camp arrival. Then she took me in her car to the main office. Her husband was there and he was very interested in my bike trip. The man running the campground offered me tea and we talked for a while. I told him that I had not seen any kangaroos during my trip and he told me about a place I could see some near Batemans Bay. His explanation sounded like I would run into a T in a road and if I looked around, I would see several Kangaroos. He also told me the route through Batemans Bay added 7 kilometers to my ride, but eliminated some big hills. The next day I never came across the T in the road and never saw any Kangaroos. I should have had him show me the place on a map. He was telling me how he tried biking and that the seat was a pain in the ass. I agreed that bike seats are very uncomfortable and it seems like even if you do a lot of biking the rear still hurts. When he found out I was from the USA, he told me people from Australia are glad that the USA is helping them deal with terrorists. Normally people do not support the USA and occasionally do not like me when I tell them I'm from the USA. In the past I've told people I was from Canada, but in Australia it seems like people like the USA citizens. (Daily bike miles 74.45 miles; 581.7 Total Miles)

Monday, December 25, 2006

I woke up at around 5:30 AM, but didn't leave camp until 6:30 AM. Not sure what took so long to get ready. The Asian campers were all over the place, a couple of them mentioned that I was not there very long. It was a cool and hilly day of biking. I was feeling very tired about 25 miles before I reached Batemans Bay. I was having trouble staying awake as I biked. The ride was near a very nice coast and there were only light showers. Near Batemans Bay I saw a huge flock of noisy white birds, it was not until later that day when I saw a few more of the white birds that I realized they were Cockatoos. I saw a lot of neat birds, but no Kangaroos (I didn't come to a T in the road with Kangaroos like the man at the Campground told me about). Since it was Christmas day almost everything was closed, even the McDonalds. When I arrived in Bodalla I saw a sign for a caravan park, but I didn't know how far down the road it was or if I would be able to find someone at the office. Since I knew I was near a Sate Forest I continued. I found a small dirt road in the forest and then a Motorcycle path that I cycled down until I found a nice place to camp. I had an excellent Christmas

dinner at my secluded camp site. I had 3 ham sandwiches and smarties for dessert.
(Daily bike miles 78.43 miles; 660.13 Total Miles)

Tuesday, December 26, 2006

I woke up around 5:45 AM and left camp by 6:30 AM. I cycled a shorts distance and found a rest stop with a short hiking trail. There was someone camped there on a bike. I went for the hike and when I returned the man on the other bike was out of his tent. I introduced myself and he told me his name was Terry and he was from Edmond, Alberta, Canada. He told me that he had biked for 6 weeks in New Zealand and that he was planning on biking to Melbourne and then back to Sydney. I was not going anywhere quickly, by 10:00 AM I had only traveled about 10 miles. In Narooma I stopped at the visitor center to see about taking a boat to Montague Island. There are supposed to be penguins on the Island. Since it was early in the day, I would have to wait all day to take the boat, it cost \$100.00 and I felt I would be better off waiting to see the Penguins on Phillips Island. Since I was in a hurry, I did not take the boat ride. I kept thinking I should have taken the boat ride. However, I did see the penguins on Phillips Island and it was probably a better place to see the penguins. On a hill near Tiba Tiba I was looking at my map to decide if I wanted to take the coast route or stay on the Pacific Highway. Terry had told me that he was thinking about taking the coast route. In looking up the roads in my bike Australia book the coastal route would have required a 12-kilometer dirt road. As I was looking at my map Terry came biking up the hill, I waved to him and it appeared he waved back. Later that evening he ask when he passed me and I told him when I waved to him on the hill. He told me that he did not see me and that most likely he was trying to shoo away flies when I thought he was waving. A little after he passed me on the hill, I caught up to him. Then we sort of biked together for the rest of the day. Mostly I tried to keep up with him. I noticed on the up hills I could keep up pretty good. However, on the down hills and flats he would leave me in the dust. I think the reason why I was going so much slower was because the airless tires I put on my bike had a higher road friction and it slowed me down. I remember noticing that the bike was slower when I first put the airless tires on my bike. Terry and I stopped at a gas station in Cobargo for lunch and Terry was getting drinking water from the Spigot in front of the gas station. I had been only drinking bottled water, but since Terry was getting tap water and I noticed working getting tap water for drinking water I figured it would be OK to start using tap water from gas station for drinking water. As I was cycling, I saw a man on the side of the road looking in a ditch. I went to talk with him and he told me he lived in Vancouver, BC, Canada before moving to Australia. The man had clipped a parrot like bird and was wondering if he should put it out of its misery or bring it somewhere for injured wildlife. I told him that I had seen signs on the road with a number to call for injured wildlife. He decided to take the bird and find out if he could bring it somewhere in the next town, Bega. I caught up with Terry at the grocery store in Bega. We decided to

stay in the same nearby campground. We were able to share the cost of a single campsite. The caravan park had minimal facilities, no picnic tables. They did have a nice restroom and a place to do laundry. The campground's restroom required a series of numbers to enter. I'm not sure why but most of the caravan parks in Australia either key lock or require a keypad code to enter the restroom. Terry and I ate dinner in an enclosure with a table near the restroom. We also looked at maps to come up with a place to meet the next night. Since I was moving so much slower than Terry, I was going to leave camp earlier than him the next day. I ended up calling Andrea at Tony and Annie's place. She told me their schedule and I told her when I thought I would arrive in Melbourne. I went to sleep around 10:00 PM. (Daily bike miles 61.20 miles; 721.33 Total Miles)

Wednesday, December 27, 2006

I woke up at 5:08 AM and left camp around 5:53 AM. Terry was still asleep and I wanted to get ahead of him so we could end out in the same location. The ride to Eden seemed easy and in town I met some people that said they saw me up north on Christmas day waiting out the rain. Since I only remember one real rainy day, which was December 23rd I believe the people may have seen Terry and thought it was me. However, I did not argue with them and we talked about my travels, then I took their photo. I like to take photos of local people in foreign countries. As I was cycling, I came to a slanted part of the road and my bike slipped into a pot hole. Then my bike started making this weird noise, it turned out that my airless tire had slipped off the rim. Oh no! When I originally put the tire on it was very hard to get on the rim and it required a special tool. Since I did not have the tool, I thought I might need to hitch a ride and buy an aired tube and tire. It turned out that I was able to man handle the tire onto the rim. I figured that the tire must have stretched since I put it on; there was no way that I could have put the tire on the rim without the tool when the tire was new. I got some water in Eden from a gas station, the man at the station said it was safe to drink. I never really looked really close at the water to make sure there were no worms in it, but it appeared to be tied to the pressurized city water so I assume it was safe. The next time I started running out of water I stopped at a rest stop about 3 kilometers before getting to the state of Victoria that had a sign with a water spicket. I assumed the photo meant safe water. There was a big barrel that said not good drinking water and then there was another spicket that did not say it was unsafe. I assumed that no sign meant safe drinking water. I put water in my bottle and held it to the light. I could see two very small worms wiggling around in the water. I then poured out the water and checked more of the water for worms. I didn't see any more worm, this made me wonder about the water I got from the gas station in Eden. I poured out the water and did not use my Camel back water bag again during my trip to Australia. I will probably throw away the water bag when I get home; I do not want to risk drinking out of that water bottle again. Terry caught up with me a little before

entering Genoa, the place we planned on meeting at the end of the day. When we arrived in Genoa, we found no campground and asked at the motel if we could camp behind the hotel. Then told us there was a free campground across the bridge in town. We then had 2 beers at the bar in Genoa and each bought an 800ml bottle of beer to take back to camp. Then we went to the campground and setup our tents. At the campground we met a couple of bikers that had been biking for 2 years. They were from somewhere in Europe. We also met some local campers. The campground was nice with lots of space for free camping. The water in the bathrooms was brown colored, not sure it was safe. The people at the motel told us the water might be safe. I decided not to drink any of the water and conserve the small amount of good water I had left. Terry cooked a great dinner and shared it with me. I do not bring cooking or eating utensils on my bike trip. I figure I make up for it with my camera equipment (Terry had no camera) and sleeping stuff. Terry and I looked at a map and agreed on trying to meet in Orbost the next day. (Daily bike miles 72.61 miles; 793.94 Total Miles)

Thursday, December 28, 2006

I woke up at 5:10 AM and left camp around 5:51 AM. Terry was still asleep and I wanted to get ahead of him so we could end out in the same location. The ride to Cann River required a big hill climb and it ended out taking me 5 hours to get there. Terry was thinking he could make it to Cann River in 3 hours, so I figured he would catch me either in Cann River or slightly after that. It was another day (like most days in Australia) with hundreds of flies following and landing all over me. They are pretty annoying. Some people get bug net hats that cover their faces with a green net. When I finally arrived in Orbost I still had not seen Terry. I don't think he passed me, but he could have. I asked people that entered town if they saw another person on a bike loaded with camping gear and they all said that they had not seen him. Oh well, I guess I lost Terry. I found the campground in town and setup my tent. It cost \$14.00/night and if Terry shows up it will be another \$4.00 for a second person at my campsite. I biked back to the highway and backtrack for a while looking for Terry. No luck, I don't think he would have kept going if he passed me, so I assume that the hills took him a lot longer than he expected. It was a very hilly day! I biked back to town and ate at a restaurant, Wendy's place, where I would be able to see Terry when he made it to town. The people camped next to me were very friendly and asked a lot of questions about my trip. They were an older couple from Lakes Entrance and camped at Orbost (only about 50 miles from their home in Lakes Entrance) to get away from the summer crowds. They told me that people were at Lake Entrance combat fishing (hundreds of people arm to arm fishing) and they wanted to get away from the crowds. There was also a man with his son that had arrived on mountain biked from Nowa Nowa on the rails to trails. They had very nice bikes and were interested in my bike, so they took a photo of my bike. They had very nice suspension mountain bikes

and were pulling trailers with their camping gear. They told me I should take the rails to trails, but they said they were good dirt trails and that some of the bridges were out and would require up and down hills. They thought overall the trails would smooth out a lot of the hills. (Daily bike miles 83.31 miles; 877.25 Total Miles)

Friday, December 29, 2006

I woke up at 5:34 AM and left camp around 6:10 AM. I looked around town and the Snowy River before leaving town around 7:00 AM. I bought a 1.5-liter coke at a store just out of Orbost and took a big drink of it before putting it back in my pack. I slowly cycled along and found a rest stop to have lunch. I noticed something was leaking in my pack and found that most of my 1.5-liter coke had leaked throughout my left pannier. Luckily, I had most of my stuff in plastic bags and I just needed to empty everything, dry off a couple of items and replace the main plastic bag that was soaked in coke on the outside. I had decided not to take the bike trail due to the fact it had hills and was a dirt track. When I arrived in Nowa Nowa I talked to a couple of campers that were cycling the rails to trails. They convinced me that the dirt trails would be safer and easier (less hills) than the highway. I knew it would be safer, but I figured the dirt trails would take a lot longer. I decided to try the trails, I backtracked to where I saw the trail on the other side (east) of the river. I followed the signs that lead to a dirt road. It was a lot of uphill and the road did not look correct with respect to the position of the trail on my map (that I picked up at the store in Nowa Nowa) vs. my GPS. The main road to Bruthen was on the wrong side of my GPS map. The road was very straight with a gradual constant uphill slope. It seemed like it could have been the rails to trails, but since it did not match my GPS, I decided to go back to Nowa Nowa after cycling about 2 miles uphill in the wrong direction. I should have listened to the directions the lady in the store gave me, however I did not find the trail when I went up the other hill, she told me to climb. I stopped at the other store in Nowa Nowa and asked how to get to the Rails to Trails and then I was able to find it. I then cycled the flat good dirt trails. I stopped at the Stony Creek Trestle bridge and had a man take my photo. The man was a local and I asked him about the highway between Bruthen and Bairndale. He told me that highway had a very big hill. Then I cycled to the top of the trestle and ran into the guy that talked me into taking the Rails to Trails and had him take my photo from the top of the old train bridge. The train bridge was fenced off on the top and was only there for viewing. The trail went to the bottom of the bridge and then you had to get back to the top of the bridge. I had to walk my bike down and up the hills near the bridge. A little before I arrived in the town of Bruthen my front bike rack broke, so I had to move my gear to the back bike racks. I was thinking about taking the main highway to save time, but decided not to because the man near Stony Creek Trestle told me it was hilly and it was nice not having all the traffic. A little distance from Brithen I missed the turn to the Rails-to-Trails. I remembered seeing a sign on the other side of the highway showing the trail and back

tracked to the sign. The turn off from my trail to the trail across the highway looked like a minor trail and was not properly marked. I was glad I took the trail it was a nice ride without all the traffic. However, lots of flies, I ended up eating a few sandwiches on a windy bridge over a river to get away from the flies. I think the rails to trails were a little farther than the highway. I finished biking to Bairnsdale and checked the first campground for Terry. I figured he may have caught me. I was told there was another campground on the other side of town, so I went looking for it. I went a couple miles past the west side of town and figured I missed the campground. I asked someone and they told me to go back and look on the left side of the road. I finally found the other campground it was a trailer court with a very small spot for tents. It seemed like a lousy place to camp and when I talked to this guy from one of the trailers, he made it sound like I might be able to stay there for free if I asked the owner. The guy told me he was originally from New Zealand and when I told him I was from the USA, he told me his dad was once a pilot for the US navy. He said his dad was stationed in Maine and was a pilot in the Korean War. He also told me I should stay in Australia. When I told him I would not be able to work there he told me his buddy could get me a job and find me a place to live. It didn't seem like a lot of what the guy was saying was correct and the campground did not look as nice as the first campground so I went back to the other campground. On the way back to the other campground I stopped and got dinner at McDonalds. I got a campsite and walked around. There were several noisy cockatoos flying around the campground. The campground was near a nice river side loop trail. As I ate my McDonalds dinner, I was able to get some good photos of cockatoos. I talked to the campers next to me that were traveling on motorcycles. They had these trailers they were pulling that folded out into small camper trailers. It looked like there rigs were very comfortable, they asked if I got claustrophobic in my very small tent. I then walked along the river trail and then walked through part of town on my way back to the campground. I looked into a couple of bars, but it looked like everyone knew each other, so I decided not to go into one of them for a beer. (Daily bike miles 73.66 miles; 950.91 Total Miles)

Saturday, December 30, 2006

I woke up around 5:50 AM and cycled the river front loop trail behind the campground. I didn't leave camp until 7:21 AM, latest departure of trip. I stopped at McDonalds for breakfast and then started my real biking for the day. I found a wallet in the ditch next to the road, it was the second wallet I had seen on the side of the road in Australia. The other wallet was near enough to the road to where a car that was looking for it might see it, so that wallet I left alone. That wallet was several days before the new wallet I found. This new wallet was hidden from the road and there would be no way a car looking for it would have found it. I picked it up and found there was an ID so I decided to bring it to the next town to give it to a lost and found. When I arrive in Sale, I stopped at the visitor center to get maps and find out if they

had a place for me to turn in the wallet I had found. They told me I should bring it to the police department. At the visitor center I also asked for a train schedule, but they did not have one. They gave me a map with directions to the police department and train station. I first cycled to the police department to give them the wallet, the officer took my name and counted the money in the wallet (I think it had \$9.50 total in the wallet). He wrote down my information and the contents of the wallet on his police report. I then went looking for the train station, I had good instructions. The funny thing is there were no signs telling you how to get to the train station, I stopped to look at my map to make sure I had the correct road. This man on a racing bike saw me looking at my map and asked where I was headed. When I told him the train station, he had me follow him to the train station. He had all the fancy biking equipment and a very nice carbon fiber Trek bike. He told me it was the best bike made and that he had not used it very many times. He talked for a long time about his bike and asked me questions about my bike trip and the USA. He also told me how he was going to pick his son up later that day. It seemed like he talked for a long time, we were in front of the train station and the man was very friendly. I ended up getting his photo to add to my collection of pictures of Australians. I went into the train station to get a timetable and they had no timetables. The man told me they only had two trains a day to Melbourne, one in the morning and one in the evening (I think it was about 4 hours after I left Sale). The ride to Rosedale was very easy on a flat road with some tail winds. I saw a lot of cockatoos flying along this stretch of highway. I ate a couple of sandwiches on a picnic table in Rosedale and saw a small bug that looked like a tick walking across the picnic table. I finished cycling to Traralgon and found a map that showed a caravan park. I cycled to where I thought the caravan park was but could not find it. I went to the nearby Hungry Jacks (same restaurant as Burger King in our country) and asked if they knew where the caravan park was located. The man went out of the restaurant and pointed out the location of the caravan park. I cycle to the location and it looked like a mobile home park, I did not see any campers. I then looked a little farther down the road and saw a man on a bike to ask about the caravan part. The man was complaining to a kid that was at the bus stop and told him he should go find refuge somewhere else. The boy looked like he was about 20 years old and had no shoes. The man on the bike said he had been in the bus stop all day and was wondering if the boy was on drugs. I thought he might have been a run away. The man on the bike took me back to the mobile home park and had me press the emergency button; no one was in the office. A man came out of the house and told us the caravan park had been converted into a retirement community. Then the guy gave me a handout with the location of the new campground. The brochure said 3 miles from downtown and the man made it sound like it was on the edge of town. I ended up cycling about 5 miles to the caravan park and it was a long distance from town. I was hoping to set up my tent and then get a beer at a pub to celebrate the completion of over 1000 miles of biking in Australia. I started thinking I should have looked into

getting a motel in town. The man in the cabin next to where I set up my tent invited me over to his place for tea. He was very friendly, but seemed a little strange. He had marijuana in little cans and told me it was medical marijuana. He told me he was a Vietnam veteran and doctor. He also told me he had 11 brothers and once worked for the secret service. Not sure if these were facts or tales. Whenever he smoked his marijuana, he would cough for a long time. That night every time I heard him coughing, I figured he was smoking more marijuana. The man was staying in the cabin for a week to get away from relatives. I think he lived in Bairnsdale (he told me but I cannot remember for sure) and he came to the campground by train with his bike. I asked the man if he was interested in biking to the nearby motel to get a beer. He told me he did not drink. I finished setting up my tent and then biked to the nearby hotel to find that they did not have an open lounge. I then biked to a nearby store and found they did not have beer. It was the only place around so I bought snacks and biked back to my campsite. I was too far from town, so I ended up updating my journal and going to sleep. (Daily bike miles 92.63 miles; 1043.54 Total Miles)

Sunday, December 31, 2006

It was rainy in the morning so I slept in until 5:45 AM and the marijuana neighbor invited me over for tea. The guy next door had been coughing at 3:00 AM, probably more marijuana. I told him thank, but I really needed to get going. I had him pose for one of my photos of an Australian. I packed up my gear, but could not find the bag for my tent stakes; I figured it was packed in my gear. I never did find the bag for my tent stakes, maybe they blew away or a dog took them. I left camp around 6:20 AM and cycled back to Traralgon and had breakfast at McDonalds. I had checked the previous day and it looked like there were a lot of trains to Melbourne. But the marijuana neighbor at the campground told me they only had 2 trains like in Sale. It turned out I was correct and they had several trains leaving for Melbourne. The train was very nice and modern with an area for a single bike. The bike was in the passenger compartment, so I could keep an eye on it. I ended up locking it to a handle to keep it from falling over and a little un-necessary security. Since the train only had 2 cars, it could actually only hold 2 bikes in the racks. Since I was on the first stop of the train, I was able to take one of the bike spots. I was falling asleep on the train. I noticed a little tingling in my fingers and toes, I figured I lost the nerve ending again. It's something that often happens on my biking trips. I had to change trains at Melbourne South Cross station and bought some postcards. Then I hopped on the train that was on the same track as the one I needed to board to South Geelong. I was not sure if it was the correct train and someone told me it was the correct train. No one was on the train so I pushed the open-door button and put my bike in the bike location. There were several people waiting for the train and they all got on the train after I opened the door. After everyone got on the train a conductor told everyone that it was the wrong train and we all had to get off the train. I think the way it works is they give you a

train track and location on the track. I believe the train we got on was at location A and the terminal said location C. Since no train was in location C everyone assumed I was correct. After everyone got off the train another train arrived on the same track, but a different location. It was the correct train for South Geelong and everyone loaded on the train and I was able to get my bike in one of the bike slots. On the train to Geelong, I wrote 15 postcards. Once in South Geelong I was not sure if Tony and Annie (Andrea's friend) lived at 3 or 227 Yarra street. I first checked out 227 Yarra and it did not look like a place with 3 units. It looked like a single home, but I did not actually go up to the house to see that it was 3 separate homes. I then cycled to 3 Yarra and found a park. I then called Tony and he told me it was 227 Yarra. I cycled to Tony's place and unloaded my bike. We had a beer together and then I went for a bike ride. I cycled to K-mart and bought some tennis shoes. Then I cycled along the Barwon River bike trail. I went back to Tony's place and found Andrea. Then I took a shower and got ready for dinner. They took us to a very expensive multi-course dinner in Queenscliff. I didn't think the food was very good and it cost way too much. Each course came with a small portion on a separate plate and looked too fancy to eat. I met Paul one of Tony and Annie's friends, he was a very nice person and ended up giving me a ride to the airport on the last day of our vacation. After dinner Tony and Annie took us to a New Years party at a local Plastic Surgeon, Dr. Ian Holten's house. He had a very nice house with 2 swimming pools, a large yard and it overlooked a large lake near Queenscliff. Ian Holten told me he had gone to a conference in Dallas, Texas and met several Plastic Surgeons in Dallas, but my brother, Greg was not one of them. However, he told me that he had heard of my brother. After the party we had to drive back to Tony and Annie's place. By the time we got to sleep it was already 3:00 AM. (Daily bike miles 17.81 miles; 1061.35 Total Miles)

Monday, January 1, 2006

I really slept in, didn't wake up until 10:00 AM. Tony, Annie, Andrea and me all drove to Queenscliff to meet up with Paul and his lady friend for breakfast. We ate at the same restaurant as we did for New Years. The prices were not as bad for breakfast and it was not as fancy a meal as dinner the previous night. They ended up getting my breakfast order wrong and eventually brought me the correct breakfast. By the time I got my meal everyone else was almost done eating their breakfast. The wrong order looked better than my order; I should have never told them that I ordered the poached eggs. My breakfast had 2 poached eggs, bread and coffee. It was not very tasty. Andrea had a cheese omelet and it was very tasty. She shared about 1/3 of it with me. After breakfast Annie and Andrea went shopping. Boy they can stay in one shop for hours, how do they do it? Luckily, I was able to get out of the shopping by talking Tony into going to the fort with me. We took the guided tour and it was very interesting. That evening I discussed going to Philips Island to see the penguin parade the following day with Andrea. I looked into renting a car, but could not talk Andrea

into taking the round trip in one day. She would not agree to go unless we first found a place to stay. I knew that would be way too expensive so I decided to get my bike ready to make the trip the next day. (Daily bike miles 0.0 miles; 1061.35 Total Miles)

Tuesday, January 2, 2006

I woke up around 6:50 AM and finished loading my bike. I was on my way to Phillips Island. I really wanted to rent a car and make the trip in one day with Andrea. But Andrea was not willing to make a long day trip and wanted to make sure she had a place to stay. It would have been way too expensive to make the trip with Andrea and it was better to cycle for my bike trip. I then biked to Queenscliff and caught a ferry to Sorrento. Not far from the ferry in Sorrento I met a man on a bike that was talking with me as I cycled. I had to struggling to keep up with him and tell him about my trip. He told me about the hills and how to bike to Phillips Island. Then he left me in the dust and I found a waterfront bike trail to cycle. I stopped on the trail and a man on an incumbent bike came over to talk with me. He told me all about his bike and I asked about climbing hills on his bike and he said he could do as good as any street bike. He was probably about 50 and didn't look like he was in great shape. But neither do I! I asked if he was visiting the area and he pointed across the bay and told me he lived in a house over there. It looked like a long distance away. He said it was only about 20 kilometers away and that he normally biked about that distance each day. He must have been in very good shape. We talked for a long time and then I took a photo of him. He also had a camera and took a photo of me and then we went our own ways. I kept thinking I did not have enough time to make it to Phillips Island and that I should have rented a car and done the trip on my own. I was thinking even if I made it to Phillips Island, I might not be able to find a place to stay. Paul had told me they had one campground and I asked a couple of people at visitor centers and they didn't know anything about campgrounds. I was also not able to find out if they had busses or any other type of public transportation on Phillips Island. The visitor centers only had information on expensive places to stay. At the visitor center in Dromana, I found out there were 3 ferries (8:30 AM, noon and 5:00PM) on Tuesday to Phillips Island from Stony Point. It was too late to catch the noon ferry and I heard it was a hilly ride, so I cycled hard to make it to Stony Point on time. The hill from Dromana to Crib point was not as bad as people made it sound. It was a single big hill on a narrow road with light traffic. I was able to make it to Crib Point by 4:00 PM, so I took my time bought food and stamps. I was able to send most of my postcards from Crib Point. Then I finished the ride to Stony Point and arrived more than 30 minutes early. I locked my bike up at the store where ferry tickets were purchased and walked along the beach. There were several pelicans. I went back to the store and meet some oriental people from Melbourne that came to take the ferry to Phillips Island. They told me the drive was an hour and a half. I thought they meant once you arrived on the island it was still 1.5 hours to the Penguin march. After asking more questions I found

out the ferry did not take cars and they had to drive around to get to the penguins. As I was talking to them it was very close to 5:00 PM and I noticed people were loading on the boat. I rushed over to the boat and when I boarded the men on the boat told me to take my gear off my bike and the man said he was tired of taking bikes on the boat. The man was not very friendly to me, he seemed nice to all the other passengers. Once on Phillips Island in Cowes I cycle to the place Paul had told me there was a campground and when I found one, I figured it was the only one on Phillips Island and I asked if they had any sites available, they only had one site. I took the site, it was by far the most expensive camp site, at \$45.00/ night, I have ever camped at to date. I thought she originally told me \$42.00/ night, but changed me \$45.00/ night. I asked about shuttles to the Penguin Parade. The lady at the campground called the duck truck and found out it was not running. She said the man who ran the duck truck was not feeling well and cancelled the trip for that evening. I told them I was going to bike to the parade. Her and another lady in the office told me it would be too dangerous to bike back from the Parade at night. I told them I did not care and I was going. They told me I should take a taxi and I insisted I could bike. I finally asked how much the camp host thought the Taxi would cost and then she called up to arrange a taxi ride for me and my bike back from the penguin parade at 10:30 PM. I really wanted to bike, but did want to keep it safe. I then set up camp and started biking, before I left town, I stopped to look at my map and some kid yelled at me out of his car window. I think he was telling me to get off the road. I was practically on the sidewalk and way out of the way of the traffic. I'm surprised how often people in cars are so rude to bikers in Australia. I then biked to the end of the road just past the Penguin parade. It was a nice ride with a neat visitor center at the end of the road. I went back to the Penguin parade paid to enter and then found out that photography was not allowed. It was a little disappointing. Then I looked in the gift shop and made my way to the beach where the penguins were expected to make their way out of the water. It was very crowded and I was a long distance from the good spots near the beach. I thought I had my binoculars, but could not find them. A couple days later, I found out I had them all along. They were hidden in my camel back water pouch. The penguins started coming out of the water, but all I could see was little dots on the beach. I could not even say for sure they were penguins. At that point I was very disappointed. Then a penguin went under the dock by my feet. That happened a couple of more times and I felt a lot better. I noticed people had shifted away from the beach and there were more good spots, so I made my way to the beach and saw several more penguins. I had to make it to the taxi by 10:30 PM, so I made my way back to the gift shops. That's when I found out the penguins were all around the decks all the way up towards the gift shop and that was why the beach front spots had opened up. I then went to the gift shop to buy a t-shirt and boomeranged. When I left the Visitor Center, I ran into the oriental people that wanted to take the ferry to Phillips Island from Stony Point, but had to driver around because the ferry did not

take cars. Then I found my taxi ride back to the campground. (Daily bike miles 64.58 miles; 1125.93 Total Miles)

Wednesday, January 3, 2006

I woke up around 6:00AM and walked around town for about an hour. I stopped at a tree full of Parrots and then moved a little to get a good photo, then all the parrots flew off and I did not get a good photo. If I would have been patient, waited for the birds to move on their own in the tree and taken the photos from my original spot they would have never noticed me and I could have gotten some great photos. I saw two different groups (one group around 7:00 AM and the other group around 8:00 AM) of about 30 bikers in each group cycling around Cowes that morning. They all seemed to have nice road bikes and most of the riders were men. I returned to the campground, took down my tent and loaded all my stuff on my bike. I then cycled to the boat dock and when I was taking photos a nice kid told me that I might be able to get a photo of a sting ray if I look for it. He showed me where he had seen it swimming in the water a few minutes earlier. I never did see the sting ray, but another kid pointed out a squid and a man spun his fishing line towards the squid and the squid took his bait. I'm not sure what he used for bait, but it was amazing how the squid was quickly moving and the man was able to land the bait directly in front of the path of the squid and the squid quickly took his bait. It took the man less than a minute from the time the squid was pointed and the time the man had the squid on the dock. I had one of the kids hold up the squid so I could get a photo of it. The ferry arrived to get back to Stony Point and the boat hand remembered me from the previous day. He comments oh no, not you again. For some reason the man did not like me. I told him I only had limited time. The previous day the man said he did not like bikes. Another lady got on the boat with a bike and the man was very nice to her. Oh well! I'm not sure why he did not like me, maybe the hair was a little long for him or maybe my beard. My hair was not very long and the man also had a partial beard. Who knows! I decided to take a different way back to Geelong. I boarded a train from Stony Point to Melbourne. I did not have to wait long for the train, I think they time the train to line up with the ferry. When I got on the train the conductor was very nice and told me to lean my bike against these three seats and sit down in his seat. He then moved and the train departed. At one stop a man about my age got on the train. I still had not paid for the train and was expected the conductor to pick up my fare. I noticed other people getting on the train and asked how I was supposed to pay. There were pay stations on the train and the one in our car was not working. This man on a bike told me the pay station was not working and that I could try the one in the next car. It appeared that man had also not paid. When I came back to my seat and more people boarded. The man told me to move my bike, the conductor was nice and told me to put the bike there, and this other guy was moody and did not seem to have a reason to boss me around. He was about my age and did not look much different from me. Maybe he

was mad because I got a good seat, however when I moved my bike so other people could sit there, he did not sit down. The man looked very mean and I think that was just him. In general, most people are very nice, however less than 1% of the people seem to be grumpy and they seemed to often be grumpy towards me. I will admit the man was correct, I should have moved my bike so other people could use the seat. Three kids sat down in the seats where my bike was leaning against and they could not have sat there if I did not move the bike. It seems like it would have made more sense if the people that wanted the seat would have asked instead of the guy that did not want it being bossy towards me. Once in Franston I had to change trains to get to Melbourne. On the train to Melbourne, I meet people that had been on the other train that were having trouble figuring out how to pay for the train fare. They tried the payment box in the other train and that one did not work. The train to Melbourne did not have a payment box. I think they never paid for the train trip. I talked with this couple and they told me they were from Darwin, Australia. After talking with them I sat down and wrote 11 postcards. Once in Melbourne I got off the train and started trying to find my way towards Geelong. There were too many roads for my GPS to help me. The maps are all there however when I go more than 5 miles out the GPS does not work properly with the maps. I had to ask directions about getting out of town and the bikers I asked seemed to think I should not even try. I was under the impression it was only about 30 kilometers (18 miles) to Geelong, but a biker told me it was more like 80 kilometers (40 miles). I figured it would be tough getting to Geelong by bike in time for dinner, so I decide to bike around Melbourne and then take the train to Geelong. I bike along the Yarra River for a while and then returned to the train station. The GPS helped me find my way back to the train station since my tracking route where I started biking was displayed on the GPS map. I had spent about 1.5 hours around town and that seemed like long enough. At the train station I realized that it was getting close to rush hour, so I bought a train ticket and asked a man at the ticket booth where I needed to get the train, he pointed to a sign and told me to look it up. It seems like he could have easily looked it up and told me. I went and checked out the sign and noticed I had about 35 minutes until the train left. I then went to the store in the train station to get postcards; the security man told me not to lean my bike up near the store and wanted me to take my bike out of the train station area. I did not want to park where he told me because I thought someone might steal the gear off my bike. I then asked if I could lock my bike to a post where I could see it and the man said no. Then I decided to leave the train station and buy postcards at the store across the street from the train station. At least at that store I could watch my locked biked from inside the glassed window store. I then went back to where the train for Geelong was going to depart. About 15 minutes later I realized I wanted the south Geelong train, not the Geelong train. Then I went to the correct track and the train was just leaving, if the man at the ticket counter would have told me the track instead of making me look at the sign, I would have easily caught the train. Then I asked at the

ticket office if I needed a different ticket since I missed my train, a different person was at the ticket office and they told me where to go. My ticket said off time discount and since it was getting close to 4:00 PM I thought I would need to pay more, but the man at the ticket office said my ticket was still good. I saw another guy on a slightly loaded bike and we loaded our bikes in the back car of the train. He told me we had to get in the train car and leave our bikes there. Neither of us locked our bikes and I felt nervous about someone hopping on the train and stealing my bike. The other guy didn't seem to be concerned about his bike, so I figured it was OK. I ended up getting on the train with the other biker and he told me he had gone bike touring in Europe and England. He had also biked from Portland, Oregon to Astoria, Oregon to Portland, Maine. When we got off the train in Geelong the other man on the bike showed me which way to go to get to South Geelong. My GPS made it easy for me to find my way back to Tony and Annie's place, I had it marked on my GPS. Tony was home, but Andrea and Annie had gone shopping. Tony and I went to get stuff at the store for dinner. When we tried starting his car it would not crank over. Apparently, the car had not been driven for a couple of weeks and the battery was discharged. We were able to push start the car and after that it would start with the key. We went to the meat store near K-mart and bought meat rolled in Bacon. Then we bought some more beer and headed back to Tony's place. Tony cooked the meat on the grill and we had a couple of beers while watching TV. Andrea and Annie got back from shopping around 10:00 PM. (Daily bike miles 13.59 miles; 1139.52 Total Miles)

Thursday, January 4, 2006

I had an Australian breakfast with Wheat Bars and milk. While biking I had discovered Wheat Bars and thought they were very dry breakfast bars. Well Tony and Annie straightened me out when they told me they were an Australian breakfast that was to be eaten soaked in milk. The milk makes them a lot less dry! Tony introduced me to another Australian treat, Vegemite. He put it lightly on toast and it tasted OK. Vegemite doesn't smell very good. I think it's healthy and it taste OK if you drowned it in something that taste good. Supposedly Australian uses it like Ketchup, on everything, but I don't think most USA citizens would like it. I was learning a lot about Australian culture from Tony, Annie and their friend Paul. I cycled over to the nearby bike shop to get a bike box and brought it back to Tony and Annie's place. Since my bike is a folding bike it appeared I would need a wider box, so I biked back to the bike shop and got a second box so I could create a box that was twice as wide. Then Andrea and I packed our gear in Annie's car and Tony took me out for a test drive. I didn't do great on the test drive since Australia has roundabouts and drive on the opposite side of the road than we do in the USA. We came up to a roundabout and he wanted me to go $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way around and end up going to the right. Since the turn starts to the left I put on my left blinker and I should have put on my right blinker. There was a police officer on one of the roads entering the roundabout. Tony

thought I was going to get pulled over and ticketed. It turned out the officer was not on duty, so he just gave us a funny look and passed us on the next intersection. Shew! Then I guess I was a little close to the cars on the left side of the road and Tony took the wheel and moved the car to the center of the road. Since I am not used to driving a right-hand drive car I needed to learn to try to stay as close as possible to the center of the road. It was a good quick lesson and after that I always tried to keep the right hand (stirring side) side of the car as close as possible to the center line (on a two-way road). We went back to Tony's place and Andrea got in the car. Originally Annie was going to go with us, that would have made the driving a lot easier. We took off and not far out of Geelong we stopped at an Aborigine art gallery. They had a lot of fair art, but everything was too expensive for me. Towards the end of our trip, we found better art at a better price at Tower Hill State Game Reserve. Our next big stop was a lighthouse and we walked around a little. I noticed in Australia the RVs are a lot smaller than the ones found in the USA, a lot of them are large vans. When we arrive in Lorne, we went to the visitor center and we were told we would be able to find Koala bears in the trees near Kennett River. They also recommended that we check out Erskine Waterfall and Teddy's Lookout. Then we went to our ocean view motel that Annie had selected. It was very nice and the only place she could find. It was the most expensive sleeping place I had ever helped finance. Andrea paid ½ of the \$300.00 per night bill. With the cost of the trip, it makes sense not to miss the Great Ocean Road, although a campground would have worked for me. We then hiked to Erskine Waterfall and it was very dry. It was a short hike and the vegetation was very nice. There were these small trees that looked like large ferns. Next, we hiked towards Teddy's lookout. It looked like the trail started at the end of the road, but we saw a sign a little before the end of the road and decided to hike a loop trail to the lookout point. We saw lots of small lizards and the view of the Great Ocean Road was spectacular from Teddy's lookout. After going to the lookout, we tried to complete the loop and ended up going downhill a lot. I kept insisting that since it was a loop trail and I saw no turn off that we must have been on the correct trail. It turned out we lost the trail. My guess is it was near the road at the top. We then had to hike up a big hill on the road to get back to the car. On the drive back to the motel we saw an Echidna crossing the road. The animal looks like a pointed nosed porcupine, I tried to get a photo of it but it would not let me see its head. It kept its spines out and head buried in the ground. Further down the road Andrea spotted a kangaroo in someone's front yard near a dog house. It was the first live Kangaroo I had seen on this trip to Australia. We got a couple of photos and then went back to the hotel. As we were having drinks in our room, we noticed all the people in the nearby bar pointing and looking up in a tree. We went outside to see a big branch had broken from a eucalyptus tree and was balancing on branches in the tree. Andrea then took a shower and I took a walk to the store. The branch had fallen to the ground and the police had the road partially blocked off. I was supposed to get back to the motel in 10 minutes and I was gone for

30 minutes, Andrea accused me of being gone for an hour. The tree patrol was in front of the motel removing the broken tree from the road. Lots of people including Andrea were watching. We then walked around town looking for a place to eat. We ended up getting take out fish and chips. We also got rum and went back to the hotel to eat. From the hotel we had a great view of the ocean and the motel bar. I was using my binoculars to look at what people were eating and drinking. A man saw me viewing his food with my binoculars and stuck his tongue at me. I deserved it! We watched a little TV and went to sleep at a descent hour. (Daily bike miles 0.78 miles; 1140.3 Total Miles)

Friday, January 5, 2006

We woke up around 6:30 AM and packed up the car. Andrea took a shower and then we started driving to Kennett River to look for Koala bears. At the store in Kennett River, they showed us the road to drive down and said we should start looking for Koala bears after driving 3 kilometers. Andrea saw one moving in a tree and we stopped to check it out. The koalas sleep 18 hours a day, so it's rare to see one moving. When we stopped it was not moving and Andrea told me to take a movie of it. I hesitated because I thought it was going to sleep. Then I decided to take a movie of it and just when I started the movie the koala bear started climbing the tree. I ended up getting a great movie. Then I started a second short movie when it started moving for a second time. At that point the Koala stopped moving, so we marked the spot with branches near the road and then continues driving. We drove about 10 kilometers and found some people camping near a stream and trail to Lookout Point. We asked the campers if they saw any Koalas and they said they thought they saw one near the Town of Kennett River at the Caravan Park. It didn't seem like the campers were that interested in seeing Koala bears, it must be something they see all the time. We had expected to see several koala bears, but had only seen one. The previous day someone told us that area had a koala bear in every tree. I guess he was exaggerating. We ended up hiking to Lookout Point and still did not see any more koalas. Then we started driving back to Kennett River and Andrea keep seeing Koala bears in the trees. We were not sure why we didn't see them on the way out to the campers. I finally saw one before Andrea saw it. We stopped where we saw the first one and it was still there. I ended up using all the memory in my 2Gig camera memory card. I placed my 512 Meg memory card in my camera and continued taking photos of Koalas. By the time we made it back to Kennett River we saw 6 koalas. Then we continued driving down the Great Ocean Road and came to a corner with tour busses and cars stopped on the side of the road. We stopped and saw 2 more koala bears. One of the bears was in a small tree and I was able to get very close (about 6 feet away) to the koala bear and get a couple of very close up photos. Our next stop was Otway Fly Tree Top Walk. Otway Fly Tree Top Walk is the world's largest Tree Top catwalk of its kind (only 3 of its kind in the world). The catwalk is 600-meters long and has 11 towers. The

highest tower is 47 meters over the forest floor. We spent a couple of hours on the catwalk. A man on the catwalk asked if I was from Canada and I told him I was from the USA. He apologized if he insulted me. I told him it was not at all an insult and that I often claim to be Canadian when I travel. He agreed that no one has anything against Canadians. We went back to the Great Ocean Road and took photos for the Oregonian with the Twelve Apostles in the background. We continued to Port Fairy where we checked into the Central Hotel that Annie lined up for us. There were historical vehicles all around town; they were getting ready for a car show the next day. Then we went to eat dinner at the restaurant that Annie got reservation for us. We had a little trouble finding the restaurant; it was at the corner of Campbell and River Front Street. The town was small, but since we did not bring our map (I thought I could find it without looking – I saw the streets on the map before we left the motel) we had to ask for directions. No one knew where Campbell Road was, but they did know how to get to the restaurant that we were headed towards. They knew the name of the restaurant. I don't think the town had very many choices for eating out. It was a white table cloth meal that was not really worth the price. I would have much rather gone to a pub for dinner. I had blue eye fish and it was a very small portion of very dry fish. Andrea ended out getting Venison, her meal tasted better than my meal. (Daily bike miles 0.0 miles; 1140.3 Total Miles)

Saturday, January 6, 2006

In the morning we got our stuff packed up and Andrea took a shower while I went for a short walk. I ended up buying postage stamps and sending all my postcards. There were lots of old cars everywhere. We checked out of the hotel and went for a long walk. Our walk started by checked out the car show, and then we walked along the water front and to Griffin Island to hike the loop trail. We checked out the lighthouse and they were letting people in for a small fee. The line was very long, so we decided not to go up the lighthouse. Walking along the beach we found several small sea shells. We then went back to town and I went to the visitor center to see if I could get information on Tower Hill State Game Reserve. They had a handout and it looked like an interesting place. Andrea went shopping while I was in the visitor center. And when I left the visitor center, I went to every shop in town 2 times looking for Andrea. I wanted to get going and could not find her anywhere. I don't understand how she can waist so much time shopping. Oh well! She finally showed up and it seemed like she was very happy about her shopping. It was nice to see she was happy. We then drove to Tower Hill State Game Reserve and since it had just rained the kangaroos were drinking water off the road. I was able to get a great photo of a kangaroo with its child in his pouch while they both drank water off the road. The game reserve did not have an entrance fee and was situated on land with an extinct volcano and a dry lake surrounding the reserve. Near the visitor center we saw Koala bears high in the branches of the trees and Emus walking around the base of the trees. Then we hiked

around the volcano rim. While on the hike we saw several kangaroos, Koala bears and emus. The hike was only a couple of miles long and the wild life was the best collection of Australian wild animals I saw on my entire trip. We also did a short hike around a water area and saw a few birds and took a movie of kangaroos jumping through the forest. We took the movie with Andrea's camera and found that the resolution was not as good as with my camera. The Aborigine art at Tower Hill State Game Reserve was much nicer than the stuff they had at the Aborigine art Gallery we checked out when we first left Melbourne. I ended up buying an Aboriginal rattle and Clap Sticks. We then drove back to Geelong and was at Tony and Annie's place around 7:34 PM. The funny thing is about an hour earlier Andrea asked me how much farther and I told her we should arrive around 7:33 PM, I was only 1 minute off. Tony and Annie cooked us a great going away dinner. Tony barbequed Kangaroo, King Island beef and lamb. He said the King Island beef was the finest beef in Australia and that the Kangaroo was better than normal. I actually liked the kangaroo better than the King Island Beef. Paul also joined us for dinner. They wanted to see our photos so we spent some time getting the photos on CDs with a lot of help from Paul. Then we looked at the photos on Tony's TV. I had a lot of packing to do, by the time I made my bike box (taped together 2 bike boxes to make a double wide box for my folding bike), loaded my gear and bike it was 4:30 AM. I was very tired! I went to sleep immediately. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; 1140.3 Total Miles)

Sunday, January 7, 2006

I woke about 8:00 AM and took a shower. Ever since I was in Australia, I noticed toilets had 2 buttons, one large button and a button about ½ as big. I asked Tony about the 2 buttons and he told me the small one uses ½ as much water and is pressed when you take a pee. The big button used more water and was used when you take a shit. I was really messing up, when I took a dump, I would try the small button and it was not enough so then I would try the other button. I was using 50 % more water than I should have been using! Since they were having a drought for the past 4 years it was not good wasting their precious water. I also asked Annie about the license plates with Ps. I found and saw a lot of small plastic P plates with green (and a 100 circled) or red (and a 90 circled) Ps and kept wondering what they meant. Annie told me they have 2 beginner driving classes with probationary (P plates) driver's licenses. The lower level is the red P plate that limits the driver to 90 KPH. After a short time, the driver is advance to the second P plate level. The second level P plate is red and limits the driver to 100 KPH for a probationary time period. Annie said the plates are normally for younger driver, but if an older driver has too many traffic violations, he may need to start driving over using the P plates. I had a lot of stuff and needed a truck to get to the airport, so Paul gave me a ride. He stayed at Tony and Annie's place so he would be there in time to give me a ride. Paul was very friendly and I felt very lucky to have the opportunity to meet him, I hope he comes to Portland someday so I can show him

similar hospitality. Likewise, Tony and Annie were great to us and I hope they also come to visit so I can take them to see the sights around the Portland area. As Paul gave me a ride to the airport, we asked each other questions about our geographical regions. I asked him about the trucks that have several trailers and he told me that in some parts of Australia there might not be a limit to how many trailers a truck can legally pull. I believe he said some areas limit the trucks to two trailers and that was all I ever saw during my bike ride. In fact, every time I saw a truck with 2 trailers it had a sign on the back that said long load. It sounded like South Australia is one of the areas where you might see a truck pulling 4 or 5 trailers. I also asked him about the way there were no advertisement billboards and he said they only allow safety signs except in some metropolitan areas. I cannot really remember seeing any advertisement signs, but lots of safe driving signs. He also pointed out one of the speed cameras on a bridge and told me they have them all over Australia. Everyone seems to drive close to the speed limit in Australia, if they speed there is a good chance one the speed cameras will get their photo and they will be mailed a speeding ticket. Paul also told me that in Australia they take photos of all the trucks in multiple part of the highway to figure out if a trucker has been driving for too many hours. In the USA a trucker keeps a log and could fudge his log so he does not appear to be driving too many hours. The way it works is you can only legally drive something like 10 hours per 24 hours. Once at the airport Paul dropped me off and told me to make sure to wait in the terminal for him. He parked the car and I checked in for my flight. Paul showed up when I was trying to check in my luggage. He helped me figure out how to check in my bike. I did not have to pay for the bike on the plane. The lady at the airport check in desk was telling me I would need to check in one of my carryon bags. I told her I had one carry on and a personal item and in the past my backpack has always been my personal item. I said it was like a laptop and she asked if it was a laptop. I said no, then she weighed my carry on and backpack. She told me I could try to get on like that and I did without a problem. Since I already had 2 checked bags it would have cost me to check my other carry on or backpack. After checking my bag, I looked at a gift shop and bought an Emu horn. I then offered to give Paul money for gas and taking me to the airport, but he would not take any money. I feel a little funny about getting so much help from Tony, Annie and Paul. I really do not know them and hope I get the chance to show them the same hospitality in the future. The 14-hour flight to Los Angeles went smooth; I watched a few movies and got some sleep. I didn't want to sleep too much so I could get back into the Portland time by staying awake until the correct time to sleep in Portland. Before landing in Los Angeles, they announced that all food, even airplane food would need to go into the quarantine barrels at the airport. I had Vegemite, smarties and 2 Kit-Kat candy bars. I didn't want to give them up, so I didn't say anything and they did not ask. I was able to give the Kit-Kats to Greg's wife Jenny and eat the smarties myself. I still have the Vegemite, not sure how long it will last! The neat thing is since there was a date change, I arrived in Los Angeles

around 7:00 AM that was 5 hours before the time I left Melbourne. When I arrived in Los Angeles the people at International did not think they had enough time to check my luggage to Portland and told me to bring it to the local Alaska Airlines check in counter. Oh no, now I will probably have to pay for the bike. I went over to Alaska Airlines and it was very crowded. I felt I did not have enough time to wait in the long line and the people at international did not tell me I could bring my bags directly to x-ray. Luckily, I found a lady that was not real busy and was able to tell me that I did not have to wait in the line since my bags were already checked to Portland. She said I could bring them directly to the x-ray machines. She also told me that I should have had them check my bags through at International. I agree they should have either checked them through or told me that I could bring them straight to the x-ray machine. Well, the good news was that I did not have to pay for the bike! It seems like they might have charged me at International if I would have had to check the luggage in there. I didn't feel like I did thing 100% correctly and was not sure if my stuff would show up in Portland. Everything went smooth; I arrived in Portland and was able to get my bike. I assembled my bike empty my gear box and loaded everything on my bike. I then broke down my 2 boxes and took my name off them. I had my name written on every side of my boxes, so it took me a long time to get my name off them. I placed the boxes near the trash can and then boarded the max for Hillsboro. I cycled from the max to my house and was home by 4:30 PM. I did all that traveling and the local time was only four and a half hours after the local time that I left the Melbourne airport. Due to the date change I had actually been traveling for over 23 hours. I then unpacked all my gear and went through all my mail. Then I biked to WinCo to buy beer. WinCo took me longer than I expected and I had to leave for the airport to pick up Andrea as soon as I returned from WinCo. Luckily her flight was a little late and I was able to get there before she landed. I already knew her flight would be late from looking up the status on the Internet before heading to the airport. On the drive to the airport, I was very tired and was having trouble staying in my lane and keeping my eyes open. It was probably not a good idea to drive. As I walked around the airport waiting for Andrea, I woke up a little and was able to safely drive back to Andrea's place after picking her up. Once we were at Andrea's place, we did a little stuff and didn't get to sleep until about 1:00 AM. (Daily bike miles 7.86 miles in Hillsboro; 1140.3 in Australia and 7.86 miles in Hillsboro Total Miles)

Monday, January 9, 2006

I woke up at 6:50 AM, took a shower and I was at work by about 8:00 AM. End of trip! I cannot believe that I never took a photo of Tony and Annie! Total biking for this trip in Australia was 1140.3 miles.