

Biking Mexico 2007/2008

Thursday, December 13, 2007

I loaded my boxed bike and bike gear into my car and drove to work. I left the boxes near my work station in the test department at Freightliner, so Tom Feller could give me a ride with my gear to the airport the next day. I went home after work finished getting ready for my trip to Mexico and then took the max to the Beaverton Transit Center where I called Andrea and she picked me up. I was at her place around 10:00 PM.

Friday, December 14, 2007

I walked to the max stop at the Sunset Transit Center with my remaining gear in a backpack. I took the max to the Rose Quarters and took a bus to Swan Island (work). Freightliner put my photo in the meet your Co-Worker spotlight and it showed up my last day before my trip. They posted a story about my bike trips with my photo on several of the work bulletin boards as well as sent out a companywide email with a link to the story and photo. People commented on my biking all day and it made it difficult to get any work done. I spent the morning setting my goal milestones for the previous year and then cleared my desk to get ready for 5S (a dumb thing Freightliners is implementing to make everyone clear their desk – They believe it will make people work more efficiently). After clearing my desk, I placed photos of all my bike trips on my desk and then headed to the test center. Around 5:00 PM Tom Feller gave me a ride to where he had to drop off wine and then we went out for a couple of beers. Then he gave me a ride to the airport. I arrived at the airport around 7:00 PM and my flight was not due to leave until Midnight. There was no one at the check in counter for Mexicana Airlines, so I had to lug my luggage (a big box of gear, a boxed bike and a backpack full of stuff) around the airport. I ended up renting a cart. They let me check my bags around 10:00 PM and I was charged \$60.00 for the bike (they said it would cost \$100.00). The flight ended out leaving an hour late.

Saturday, December 15, 2007

The flight from Portland left around 1:00 AM. I took a sleeping pill and only woke up for the free snacks. When I filled out my declaration form, I stated yes to the question about having food. My food was stored in one of my boxes, it was just breakfast bars. I kept thinking they would take apart my box in Guadalajara, Mexico but it turned out customs was not until Mazatlán, Mexico. The flight to Mazatlán was late and when I arrived, they never asked about my food and I was able to easily slide through customs. Since I had a much bigger than normal bike box and I only needed to turn the handle bars I was able to quickly assemble my bike and take off. It was the fastest I had ever gone from boxes to biking. I biked until dusk and stop at a restaurant to ask about motels. They told me 3 more miles. After 3 miles I saw no motel. I ended up

cycling a total of 6 miles past the restaurant to the town of Rosario. I biked through the main part of town and could not find a motel. Then I biked on the highway that bypassed the downtown and found a motel. (Daily bike miles 35.04 miles; 35.04 Total Miles)

Sunday, December 16, 2007

I woke up around 6:30 AM and started biking about 7:00 AM. The morning was foggy and with no shoulder on the roads I was concerned about the traffic. Nothing happened! I was biking on the old highway 200. There was a newer parallel toll highway 200, but I figured bikes might not be allowed on the toll road. I ended up coming to a part of the road with construction near the town of Escuinapa De Hidalgo and people monitoring the traffic. At that point I was confused and ended up on the toll road. The construction had part of the road closed and at first, I was able to bike on the closed road without any traffic. The old road had more trucks and slower moving cars than on the old highway. The toll road had a great shoulder. Therefore, it was the best choice. The road was flat and made for some easy cycling. I came across a turned over diesel truck with several people checking it out. It looked like the truck had been there for quite some time – weeks, months, who knows. I went to take a photo and a bunch of people got in my photo. There was even a man on a horse that showed up in my photo. The toll road bypassed all the towns and I found that I was running out of water. I ended up biking to a town Rosamorada that looked like it was next to the toll road according to my map. The map showed that Rosamorada had a gas station, but I did not see one. It turned out Rosamorada was about 2.5 miles from the toll road. When I arrived in the town, I had trouble finding a grocery store and did not see a gas station (I did not need gas, but found that most gas station had a store near the pumps). I found a store and bought supplies. I noticed that there was a very young girl (about 10 years old) bagging groceries. The lady in front of me tipped the bagger girl. Since I was not custom to tipping the grocery bagger, I did not tip the very young girl. I noticed she did not look at me like she expecting a tip. I'm not sure if it is custom to tip the young person that bags your groceries. There was a neat church in town and after checking it out I had trouble finding my way back to the toll road. I don't think this town saw very many Gringos. I noticed several people looking at me. They seemed to wonder what I was doing and did not look like they wanted to cause any problems. I had trouble finding the main highway, but I believe having the GPS helped. I went back to the toll road and biked until a little before sunset. I found a nice wall that hid me from the traffic where I set up my tent to camp. (Daily bike miles 111.67 miles; Max speed 29.5 MPH; Average speed 11.6 MPH; 146.71 Total Miles)

Monday, December 17, 2007

It was a bad day for my bike. I took off from camp and noticed my bike odometer

cable was broken. That day I used my GPS to record my daily bike miles. The riding was flat and easy on highway 15, the toll road. Then I turned off onto a small highway to San Blas. I ended up getting my first flat of this trip right after I turned off Highway 15 and started towards San Blas. I was at 700 feet in elevation and was expecting an easy downhill ride to the sea level town of San Blas. Well, it turned out to be a harder hillier ride to San Blas. Half way between San Blas and Las Varas my bike made a noise and the pedaling quit working. I got off my bike and noticed my derailleur broke off my bike. I never had anything like that happen before. I figured I would have to hitch a ride to the next big town. I decided to try making my chain shorter and bypassing my derailleur. As I was trying to fix my bike a young girl (probably about 15 years old) biked past me and asked if my bike was broken (she said something like bicicleta kaponk – I figured that was asking if my bike was broken – I answered sí (yes)). After she passed me, she was laughing as she told this other man a gringo on la bicicleta del kaponk. She said something like that and I interpreted it as that white guy has a broken bike. The man the girl was talking to came over to help me. I really did not need help and he actually made it harder for me to fix the bike. I finally fixed it like I originally planned and the man took off as I biked away. Now I only had my middle gear working without the ability to change gears. The chain jumped to a lower gear a few times and locked up the rim. Every time the gear jumped to the lower gear I had to take off my rear bike rim to get the chain un-jammed. I noticed the bike still felt a little unstable and I took a closer look to find that my bike rack was also broken. I ended up finding a stick and wiring the stick to the rack. After that I biked to a small town where I found a bike shop that did not have any derailleur for sale. I continued biking another 10 miles or so to the town of Las Varas and found two more bike shops that did not have derailleur. At one of the bike shops the man had me following him to the bus station. I then took the bus to Puerto Vallarta. I was not sure where to get off the bus and the people on the bus were not very helpful. I got off near the airport and I think I might have gotten off one stop too soon. I asked about direction to the cheap motels and they said it was out of the range of my map (my map showed downtown, but not all the way to the airport. The map was the one that came with my Lonely Planet travel book). I came to an area with expensive motels and asked a lady at a visitor center booth about the cheap motels. At first the lady did not want to tell me, when I pointed out where I wanted to go with respect to my Lonely Planet book, she gave me directions to the cheap motels. I found a reasonable priced motel and got a room for the night. The man at the motel told me where to find a bike shop. I tried to find the bike shop, but had no luck. I went back to the motel and told the man there was no bike shop. The man ended up calling his daughter and then told me where I would be able to find a bike shop the next day. I walked around for a long time, a couple of times people tried to rent me their sisters. I got groceries and a door lock to tie to my rack. Back at the motel I fixed my broken bike odometer cable and wired the deadlock to my broken rack. That was the way I used my rack for the next 700 +

miles. I washed my shirt in the sink. Since my bike odometer wire was broken, I used my GPS miles for that day's mileage. (Daily bike miles 76.62 miles; 223.33 Total Miles)

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

I woke up around 8:00 AM. I decided I had better stay for a second night to get my bike fixed, so I paid for a second night at the motel. The man at the motel and his daughter told me where to find a bike shop. I went looking for it and since they gave me great directions, I was able to find it without a problem. I had to search a few streets. Once I found the bike shop, I was able to buy a rear derailleur and chain. The bike shop did not have a mechanic and the guy gave me real weird instruction for a mechanic. Since the man's daughter at the motel told me about other places with mechanics, I went in the direction she told me to go. It was the opposite direction from what the man at the bike shop told me to go. I quickly found another bike shop. I'm not sure why the man at the other bike shop did not tell me about the nearby bike shop. Maybe he did not like his nearby competition. Well, the second bike shop's mechanic was also off duty, so I continued to the bridge that the lady from the motel said had mechanics. After crossing the bridge, I decided to head back and that's when I found a bike shop with a mechanic. The parts were expensive (from the first bike shop) and the labor was cheap (from the last bike shop). The mechanic did a great job on my bike. He even straightened my bike frame as well as truing my tires. I ended up giving the mechanic a good tip. After getting my bike fixed, I biked back towards the motel and a man recruited me for a whale watch tour. I had a couple of hours to spare so I walked my bike along the board walk and then biked to the boat marina. I had a little trouble finding my whale watch boat. Once I found the boat tour area, I had enough time to cycle back to the Kentucky Fried Chicken to buy lunch. The biking was challenging with all the traffic, I was able to lane split past buses and cars. It seemed a little dangerous, but it was the way people bike in Puerto Vallarta. When I got back to the boat dock, I found my boat and was charged an additional harbor fee (I was not told there would be another fee). The boat trip included free drinks and tostados. I ended up drinking a lot of Pina Coladas as well as rum and coke. I was a little buzzed when the food showed up and while I was having this guy take my photo I slipped on the deck and spilled my food. I felt like the dumb drunk US citizen. It turned out everyone agreed that the boat was slippery where I slipped and fell over. They cleaned up the food I spilled and gave me another tostado. The tostados had onions and since I do not like onions it was not very tasty. However, I was very hungry so I ate it onions and all. We saw a lot of whales and I got some great photos. One had the tale of a whale and another photo with the whale's head coming out of the water. I went back to the motel and put my bike in my room. Then I bought stuff at the store and walked around. I ended up having trouble deciding where to eat. I walked around for a long time before I decided to get fish tacos at a small restaurant. I

order a couple of fish tacos and a beer. This lady liked my shirt, so I invited myself to eat with her and her sister. One of the ladies was from Chicago and the other lady was from Miami. They were sisters and often traveled places to meet up. One of the ladies spoke good Spanish and the other one did not speak Spanish. I think the lady that spoke Spanish spent a lot of time in Puerto Vallarta. (Daily bike miles 21.31 miles; 244.64 Total Miles)

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

I left my motel around 7:30 AM and started biking south. The first part of the ride was fairly flat and I passed the motel where Elizabeth Taylor played in the movie, "The night of the Iguana". The days ride started out flat followed by a steady uphill. I was feeling good and kept thinking the hill would end. I just kept biking up and had no idea how long until I would reach the top. A man and lady passed me in a jeep. The lady looked back and a few minutes later I saw them headed down the hill. I waved and noticed the lady was taking my photo. I felt bad because my wave probably messed up her photo by covering my face with my hand. The uphill seemed to go forever. It turned out to be the biggest hill of this bike trip. The summit of the hill was 2484 feet above sea level. The summit was about 20 miles from Puerto Vallarta. When I stopped for lunch and opened my can of tuna, I noticed it had corn and peas mixed in with the tuna. It was tasty, the next time I had only tuna and then decided to try to find the tuna mixed with corn and peas thereafter. As I was biking, I saw a lizard run down a hill that was more than a foot long. I found a hilly spot that looked like it would be a good place to hide from the traffic and camp. I ended up setting up my tent on the hill under the barbed wired fence. I noticed a better spot on the other side of the fence, but I do not like to camp on private property. After not being very comfortable for about an hour I decided to move my camp to the better spot on the wrong side of the fence. I left my bike near the fence. I was not close to my bike and I thought I heard noises that night near my bike so I went to get my food and put it in my tent. I thought the noise might have been animals after my food, but I was wrong. (Daily bike miles 64.47 miles; Max speed 31.5 MPH; Average speed 8.8 MPH; 309.11 Total Miles)

Thursday, December 20, 2007

I woke up around 7:00 AM and started biking around 7:20 AM. It was a hilly day and I started wondering if I would be able to make it to Acapulco in time to catch Andrea. When I arrived in Barra De Navidad, I stopped at the first motel and got a room. I decided to take the cheap room without a TV, so they charge me the price (\$300.00 Pesos) for the no TV room and gave me a room with a TV (should have cost \$350.00 Pesos). What luck! The other motels in town would have probably cost more since they were near the ocean. I ate at a very nice restaurant and had a not very tasty filling dinner with Bruschetta cheese and tostados. I was very hungry and ate everything

even though it had onions. I also had a taste Shrimp Linguini and 2 margaritas. I told the waiter at the restaurant about my bike trip and he gave me 2 thumbs up. I went to a store looking for bread, but they had none. Then I went back to the motel and left me groceries and then went to another store where I was able to get some bread. I watched TV for a while and then went to sleep. (Daily bike miles 69.35 miles; 378.46 Total Miles)

Friday, December 21, 2007

I got up early in the morning, 8:00 AM and found out I was locked in the motel. I packed up all my gear and found the motel main door was still locked so I had to ring the bell and the guy in a nearby room crawled out of bed to let me out of the motel. About 22 kilometers before reaching Manzanillo, I was able to bypass the town and stay on the main highway. I should have choice the route that took me through the town of Manzanillo. The bypass was hilly and had signs (red bike with circle and line through it) that said no bikes. Also, I went to get my last 1.5 liters of water and found that I was out of water. I found a gas station where I bought supplies and while I was taking a break a police car showed up and the police also took a break. I was a little nervous about biking onto the highway since this part of the highway had signs that indicated no bikes. The police ended up leaving before me and then I continued biking. At one point another police passed me on the highway, but did not stop. This was the only portion of the highway with signs that indicated no bikes. I believe I would have bypassed this section of the highway if I would have taken the route through the town of Manzanillo. I decided to get off the highway at one point to see if I could find a road that allowed bikes and got my second flat tire of the trip. I stopped under a bridge to fix the flat and a kid in a truck stopped to see if I needed help or a ride. I said no and he waited until I finished fixing my flat. I really did not want him there and when I left, he was giving me an angry glare. I was smiling and trying to be nice. I think he might have wanted me to tip him for his efforts, but I did not see why. I came up to a toll road and a man at the toll booth showed me where to pass the booth on a sidewalk. On the other side of the toll booth was a grassy spot with restroom where I took a break. As I was taking a break a man (I think he said his name was Poco) from California came over to me and we talked about my bike trip. He told me he had been driving from Humble County California to Southern Mexico (near Puerto Angel) for the past 30 years. He said he was headed to a beach where people smoked Marijuana on the beach and the beach was clothing optional. The man ended up giving me an AAA map of Mexico and a magic cookie. The road got flat and became easy riding. I stopped at a truck stop to take a photo of a Freightliner truck and a guy watching me invited me over to get his photo near his friend's Scania truck. In the town of Tecomán I paid for a room without a TV and again I was able to get a room with a TV, so I tipped the guy 20 pesos. I walked around town and did not see any Gringos. It seemed like everyone was staring at me and I felt a little nervous in this

town. I think the town was perfectly safe! (Daily bike miles 73.44 miles; 451.9 Total Miles)

Saturday, December 22, 2007

I left the motel around 8:00 AM. I was searched by the military at one of their stops and they wanted to know if I had Marijuana or guns. I was a little nervous since I still had my magic cookie. The military man that searched my handle bar bag put the stuff from the bag including my magic cooking on a table. When they were done searching me, I gathered my stuff and put everything back on my bike. Good thing they do not have dogs. I stopped at a road side rest stop and meet a friendly man that was a fire fighter from Guadalajara with this family. He offered me a piece of chicken, but I said no. I ended up taking a photo of him and had him take a photo of me with my camera. I ended up getting my third flat of this trip as I entered a small town and decided to fix it at a bus stop. This guy watched me as I fixed my flat while giving me mean looks. He was not there when I first arrived at the bus stop and he offered me bread, but I said no. I just ignored him and when I was done fixing my flat, I smiled and said bye. I saw a lot of very nice green Columbia Freightliner dump trucks in this part of Mexico. I entered the state of Michoacan and this was some of the toughest biking. The state of Michoacan was very scenic and less populated. It was my favorite state in Mexico. I was a long distance from a real town and noticed the ocean was near cliffs ahead. I noticed a lot of people living in the woods and figured no one would be near the cliffs and found a nice spot to set up camp. After setting up camp I heard dog and roosters nearby. Throughout the night I kept hearing these dogs stop and start barking. I think the dogs may have smelt my scent and the owner kept bringing the dogs in when they started barking. I did not sleep well that night I kept thinking someone might let their dog go and the dog might attach my tent. Luckily nothing happened. (Daily bike miles 67.48 miles; Max speed 31.5 MPH; Average speed 9.5 MPH; 519.38 Total Miles)

Sunday, December 23, 2007

I left camp as soon as it got a little light. I could hear dogs and roosters first thing in the morning. I left camp at 7:35 AM (I think it was my earliest departure of my entire trip). I biked a short distance from camp and noticed a small village. No wonder I kept hearing dogs barking! I saw two live tarantulas (several dead ones – this was the only day that I saw all the tarantulas) that day, the first one I took photos of it as it crossed the road and the second one, I took a short movie as the spider crossed the road. As I was stopped taking a break on the side of the road a passing police officer gave me a funny look and waved. Luckily, he kept going and left me alone. I thought I was about to run out of water and found an unmarked town with a store to get supplies. That night I ended up staying at a nice ocean front motel. The nicest motel I stayed at before meeting up with Andrea. The motel did not include a towel, but was on the

beach and had a TV. I also found a small lizard in the room. I walked along the beach after settling down and found a neat view of a rock with a hole in the middle. I went to the nearby Pemex gas station and found it was closed and did not have a store. I then walk back to the motel and ate dinner at the motel restaurant. (Daily bike miles 63.29 miles; Max speed 33.5 MPH; Average speed 8.7 MPH; 582.67 Total Miles)

Monday, December 24, 2007

In the town of Caleta De Campos I stopped to take a photo and the taxi drivers commented on me getting my picture. I ate about half of my magic cookie and it really got me going. It was a bad day for the bike, my rear wheel was feeling wobble. When I inspecting my rim I noticed about half of the spokes were loose. The whole trip they seemed a little weird, but it was starting to get to a point where I figured either tighten the spokes more often or have trouble completing the bike ride. I had to spend at least an hour tightening spokes and truing my wheel. A man that drove by in a truck gave me a bad look and yelled at me. He was the only person on this trip that really did not like me biking on the road. I saw another big green lizard near the road and this time I got a not very good photo of it. It was a long distance away when I took the photo with my 12X lens. I came across a man brushing his teeth in front of a truck with Oregon license plates. It turned out the man lived in Southern Oregon (I think near Grants Pass). I took a couple of photos with the man from Oregon. He told me he had been traveling to this part of Mexico for the past 10 years. I asked him how far he was going to travel south. He told me he was currently at his final destination. He was living with a Mexican family which he stayed with each year. I asked if he spoke good Spanish and he said no. When I was ready to camp, I could not find a good place near the road. The barbed wire fence was close to the road and not much foliage to hide from the traffic. I finally found a spot that I thought I would be able to hide from the traffic. When I got behind the bushes, I noticed I could still clearly see the traffic. I ended up scrapping dead grass from the side of the road and packing it in the bushes between me and the highway. I was pretty hidden from the road and setup my tent. I then tightened my spokes again and added glue to each spoke hoping it would keep them from self-loosening (it did not work, a few days later I put lock tight on the spokes and that helped) It was a hot and humid evening which made it tough getting to sleep that night. (Daily bike miles 66.34 miles; Max speed 29.5 MPH; Average speed 9.1 MPH; 649.01 Total Miles)

Tuesday, December 25, 2007

I heard no dogs barking that night. However, at about 7:00 AM I heard a dog barking nearby. I heard the dog bark two times and then started breaking down camp. Shortly after that a man drove by going very slowly in a truck. He saw me behind the bushes and gave me a blank look as he continued driving. I might have been camped between the highway and his ranch, but I don't think he really cared. I cycled to a gas station

that did not have a store, I wanted stuff to eat and all I could do was buy stuff from the vending machines at the gas station. The next gas station was a long distance away near the town of Zihuatanejo. After leaving Zihuatanejo I cycled until I ended up at the airport. I missed the turn onto the main highway. I asked people at the airport how to get back to the main highway. Since I do not speak much Spanish and they seemed to understand limited English it was tough to figure out what I needed to do. I finally understand the direct and needed to backtrack 2 kilometers. After backtracking for 2 kilometers, I saw a not very well marked road and took it south. The road turned out to be the correct way and I was back on the highway headed south. That day I saw lots of people swimming in rivers, it was a hot day. When I arrived in Petatlán I started looking for a motel. I went through the main part of town and found the Hotel California. It looked like it was open but the door was chained shut. I found a second motel that looked like it was closed. I guess they were closed for Christmas day. I went back to the main road and checked for a motel near the highway. I found a motel that was open next to the highway. The motel was cheap and run down. No hot water or fan, it was a hot humid room. The room was near a porch where I could eat or drink as I watched people walk around below me. I walked around the town area and did not see any other Gringos. I found a place to eat, but they did not understand my limited Spanish. They called a man over to interpret my English. He was very helpful in telling them I wanted 4 tacos and a beer. Another guy at the restaurant was very friendly and wanted me to have a beer with him. He kind of talked me into getting him a beer, but he did not ask and probably would have paid for his own beer and possible I could have had him buy me a beer. The man that I had the beer with helped me with my Spanish and seemed to want to talk forever. I guess he wanted to practice his limited English. As I walked down the road the man that helped me order my tacos asked me what I was doing in Petatlán. I don't think they see too many Gringos in this town (Petatlán). I told him about my biking trip and he told me that he lived part time in Dalles, Oregon. His Grandfather owned a house in both Dalles, Oregon and in that town (Petatlán). His Grandfather also owned a business near the taco stand. I went back to my motel room and worked on my bike. I noticed that I had broken a second spoke (I broke the first one a day out of Puerto Vallarta) and that several of the spokes had loosened up again. I ended out finding a tube of lock tight in my tool bag and placed a drop of lock tight on each spoke. The lock tight kept the spokes from loosening for the rest of my trip. I also put more wire on my broken rear gear rack. It seemed like my bike was just barely holding up. However, I felt I should be able to continue my journey as long as I was careful with the rear rim. (Daily bike miles 68.4 miles; Max speed 31 MPH; Average speed 10.0 MPH; 717.41 Total Miles)

Wednesday, December 26, 2007

In the morning, I took a dump in the rest room and found the toilet would not flush. I found out the water to the toilet was turned off and turned it on. I was able to flush the

toilet and found that the plumbing to the toilet leaked so I turned off the water to the toilet after I was done. That day's ride followed very scenic cliffs that dropped into the ocean. I biked up to 3 men on the side of the road in a very nice new full sized Dodge truck. The driver was a 60-year-old man named Gustiva (I'm not positive this was his name, but I'm sure it's close to correct) with his 18-year-old son and the other guy was Gustiva's wife's brother. Gustiva offered me an 80-kilometer ride and I said no. Neither of us were in a hurry so we talked for a while. Then he told me when I was down his way to come by his wife's parent place for dinner. Since one of my main reasons for biking is to meet local people, I decided the only way I would be able to meet up with him for dinner is if I took the ride. Therefore, I told him I would take the ride and join him for dinner (actually it was more like lunch). Gustiva spoke very good English and told me that he was a Lawyer in Laredo before retiring in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Now that he was retired, he was teaching at a university. Gustiva told me how he had become a naturalized US citizen when he was a lawyer and that he had lost his Mexican citizenship. When he wanted to return to Mexico, he had to apply for his Mexican citizenship back and somehow was able to get dual Citizenship. Normally people cannot get dual citizenship unless there are special circumstances. Gustiva told me before he became a lawyer, he had gotten an Engineering degree and in the 70s he was worker for Danar in the Detroit area. When he was 40 he decided to get his Law degree. After getting his law degree he went back to school to get an MBA. He told me he was going to get another masters, but decided it was a waste of money. Gustiva was a very motivated, friendly, intelligent man. His wife's parent place was some sort of a sewing or material (they had rolls of fabric in the living room) shop. Several people came up to a window while I was visiting with Gustiva and bought material or something. The business appeared to be a legitimate good business. I just was not sure exactly what they had for sale. It seemed like one man got cigarettes and most of the other people stitching material. The house had a big crack on the wall and Gustiva told me it was from an earthquake they had a month earlier. Gustiva told me that some of the kids in the neighborhood were drug dealers and even owned helicopters. Gustiva went on to tell me how he once had a collection of AK57 (different years) and a person working for him that he had fired threatened to tell the police about his guns. Gustiva took the guns to someone else's house and when the police search his home, they did not find anything. After that he was afraid to keep the guns and sold them. For dinner (lunch) Gustiva's wife cooking a refried beans and egg dish for dinner. We also had cheese and bread. It was a very good meal. Since it was his wife's parent's house, he could not invite me to spend the night. Gustiva's son had his truck and I needed to get back to San Jerónimo (main town). Gustiva's wife's parents place was a few kilometers from the town of San Jerónimo and before taking me to his wife's parents place Gustiva showed me a motel that he used to stay at when he was courting his current wife. Around 7:00 PM I decided to bike to San Jerónimo (near highway 200) before it got dark. The motel Gustiva's had

showed me earlier was the Hotel San Francisco. When I arrived at the motel there were several people waiting for a room and no one at the office. By the time the motel operator got to me all the rooms with TVs and bathrooms were rented out. The only room he had left was used for storage and they removed the junk and rented the room to me for 100.00 Pesos. I would have rather spent more money and gotten a room with a restroom. There was a place with a shared restroom so I could still use the shower and toilet. The motel had a much better ceiling fan than the room I had the previous night. I walked around town and it looked like another town that was not accustomed to Gringos. Then I walked to a store near the highway to buy supplies. Back at the motel I went to my room and I could hear people staying at the motel visiting outside my room. I would have liked to visit with the other people but did not feel comfortable talking with them since I do not speak enough Spanish. I ended up staying in my room reading, working on my bike and writing notes in my journal. (Daily bike miles 31.93 miles; Max speed 26.0 MPH; Average speed 9.3 MPH; 749.34 Total Miles)

Thursday, December 27, 2007

I was biking along the highway and a man working on his truck waved me over. I could not really understand his Spanish, but his twisting hand indicated that he wanted to see if I had a screw driver he could borrow. I got my tool bag out and he did not understand how my multi-use tool could be used as a screw driver. He showed me his loose radiator hose and I started tightening the screw with my tool. I realized it was not a big enough screw driver blade to efficiently tighten the hose screw. I lent him the tool and then search my tool bag for a better screw driver. I found my bigger reversible (flat head/ Philips head) and let him use it. The flat head on the reversible screw worked much better and the man was able to properly tighten his radiator hose. I continued cycling and ended out getting my fourth flat of this bike ride. I fixed the flat and continued biking. I stopped at a gas station to get supplies and noticed a heavily armed police officer coming out of a side door. I often saw strange door at gas stations, I wonder if that meant a lot of them had police behind closed doors. For most of the day the cycling was easy. The last 6 miles required going over a big hill and riding through heavy traffic. I had trouble finding downtown Acapulco. I got to an intersection and got out my Lonely Planet travel book. I then ask a man near a taxi how to get to the area I pointed to in my book (the area with cheap motels). The man had trouble understanding me, but once he figured it out, he gave me good enough directions so I was able to find the main drag. I did not find the exact motels from my book, but I did find the correct area. I went to 6 different motels and none of them had rooms available. One of the motels I believe had rooms for more than one person and I tried telling the man I would take a room for 2 people, but he would not rent one to me. At that point, I was not sure where to go next. A man at one of the motels told me about a motel around the corner that should have rooms. I went to that motel and the receptionist said that they had no rooms. I continued looking and the man that told me

about the room found me and took me back to the same motel, but introduced me to a different person. The other person was able to give me a room. I tipped the man for helping me find a motel room. The people that ran that motel spoke very good English; I think they were originally from the USA. One of the guys, Kevin (he was managing the Hotel California and his wife was managing the motel I was staying in), with blue eyes told me he was originally from San Francisco, California and had been living in Acapulco for 20 years. The guy, Puswel, that told me they did not have any rooms was working at the motel and I believe he was also from California. Puswel was quit and did not seem very friendly. I think he might have been a person that returned from Vietnam, he seemed like he would be a nice person if you got to know him. Normally it's a lot easier to find a room in Acapulco, but everything was booked up due to the Christmas holidays. Once I settled into the motel and took a shower, I walked around town. The room was cheap and run down. The toilet did not have a toilet seat, there was no toilet paper and I did not get a towel. I also noticed a cockroach in the room that evening. Acapulco is a crowded, polluted, dirty city. Most of the taxis in town are old Volkswagen bugs. I did not really like Acapulco at first. I decided to try to call Andrea to tell her I might head south for a few days before getting together with her for New Years in Acapulco. My original plan was to meet her in Acapulco on December 29th and then head south. She was planning on driving south to meet me in Huatulco. I got a calling card and it took me a while to figure out how to call long distance. Once I figured it out, I called her and could hear her voice but she could not hear me. I think I might have needed to push a button for out calls (I recall having to do that when I went to Baja California, Mexico a couple years earlier). After having trouble making the call I went back to the motel and asked the motel receptionist if there was a button I needed to press for outgoing calls and he said no. I then tried calling Andrea collect and found that her phone would not accept collect calls. I decided to give up for a while and went to find something for dinner. I had chicken, tortillas and a beer. I noticed the salt had dark spots in it, probably not a very sanitary restaurant. The restaurant was in a prime location, right across the road from a small ocean beach and near the cheap motels. I then went to an Internet Café and sent Andrea an e-mail telling her my plans. I then tried calling her again and only got her voice mail. In the voice mail I told her my plans and said I left the details in an e-mail I had just sent her. When I returned from the Internet Café the man at the front desk in the motel asked me if I was going to see the cliff divers. I didn't know anything about the location or time of the show. He told me it was very close and the show would start in about an hour. I quickly got ready and walked up to where the man told the cliff divers were located. The cliff diving viewing area was very crowded and I was not able to get a great spot to view the show. After the show I returned to the motel and updated my journal before going to sleep. (Daily bike miles 53.82 miles; Max speed 21.0 MPH; Average speed 8.6 MPH; 803.16 Total Miles)

Friday, December 28, 2007

I started the day by walking along the waterfront in the morning. Most of the people were not up yet and it made for a great uncrowded waterfront walk. I was following the waterfront and came to a place that was not easy to get from the beach to a sidewalk. The sidewalk had a sign that said something about private property (I guess, since I do not know Spanish, I kept going). I was not exactly sure what the sign said and followed some people from the nearby hotel along the waterfront sidewalk. I went through a gate and a man asked me what I was doing and told me to leave the private property (I believe that was what he told me, he led me away and pointed to where I had trouble getting to the sidewalk along the beach). Before getting back to the beach I noticed a shortcut back to the main road and decided to head that way. It required going through a gate and as I was leaving these hotel security guards ask me what I was doing and wanted me to head back. They kind of told me off and finally let me go through the gate to get off the private property. Then I returned to my motel and asked about a nearby bike shop. I needed to get my 2 broken spokes fixed. The bike shop was a few miles away, the man at the motel gave me good directions and I was able to find it without any trouble. I figured it might take a while and decided to pay for a second night at the motel. I cycled to the bike shop and the man that fixed my bike was a little sloppy. He really cranked down my spoke (another spoke broke afterwards) and did not make sure the tube was not pinched (I ended up getting a flat from the pinched tube). He worked really hard, but not really what I asked for, so I did not tip him. I think he was expecting a tip because he did more work than just replace the spokes. He adjusted my brakes and trued my rim. Back at my motel, I asked if they knew whether or not there was a place to store some of my gear at the airport and how I could get to the airport by bus. The husband, Kevin, of the lady running the motel told me I could store stuff at the motel (Hotel California) he was managing. I got my stuff ready and packed as much gear as possible into my duffle bag and rear panniers and then I took the stuff to the Hotel California. I was concerned about getting my stuff back when I returned to Acapulco after continuing to bike south for a couple of days. Kevin gave me his card and the name of the guy, Puswel, whom would get my stuff if he was not available. I wanted to cycle without my camping gear and stay in motel, and then take the bus back so I could get together with Andrea. I went back to the motel after getting my bike fixed and stored my bike in my room. I then walked to see the cliff divers during the daylight show. It was not as crowded as the night show and I arrived early enough to get one of the best spots to view the show. Before the show I was deleting unwanted pictures from my camera. I ended up draining the battery viewing the photos and deleted unwanted pictures. I did not bring any extra batteries and ended out running my batteries too low to take photos during the entire cliff dive show. At the beginning of the show, I was able to get some good photos and movies. It was too bad, because I had one of the best spots to view the divers and my camera batteries died. I then walked around looking for souvenirs, but

could not find anything I wanted to buy. After that I got my bike and cycled around the Peninsula De Las Playas. Some of the view houses near the road were very fancy homes and other homes were small shacks. I noticed at some of the nicer homes the top of the walls were lined with broken glass to keep out intruders. At Playa Caleta I found a very crowded nice beach. I noticed some of the city buses had very fancy painted murals on the back. After the beach I continued biking until I arrived at the cliff diver's location. This was going to be the third time I had seen the cliff diver. I was early for the show and hung out by biking around until 7:00 PM. I decided not to pay the fee and watched the show from across the harbor on a bridge with the locals. I first watched the sunset over the ocean at a local's view point. Very nice sun set! I was a long distance from the diver and did not get a great view, however it was not much worse than the view I paid for the previous night. I went back to the motel and stored my bike. Then I walked around the shopping area. I bought post cards, food and sunscreen. (Daily bike miles 11.58 miles; Max speed 20.5 MPH; Average speed 5.0 MPH; 814.74 Total Miles)

Saturday, December 29, 2007

I finished packing my bike and left the motel early. I asked the lady at the motel how I could get to highway 200 to head south. The man that might have been a Vietnam veteran told me the bridge was out and that I would have to go a different way. I was very confused on what he was saying and was concerned about having a bridge out. When I first got to the main waterfront drag a German man (probably about 30 years old) biked over to me and asked where I was headed. He had racks and front panniers on his bike. I told him I started in Mazatlán and was only going to bike south for a couple more days. He said that he would look for me when I return, maybe we could get together (I never saw him again). He asked me if I was interested in biking to Argentina with him. I told him I was interested, but needed to go back to work. Wow, I would have really enjoyed making that trip. He had already biked from the USA to Cabo San Lucas, Baja California, Mexico and from Puerto Vallarta to Acapulco (maybe more). He told me he was on a 3-year bike ride and that he was working when he needed money. He was currently working for a week painting and was complaining about the low salary. I started thinking as he goes towards Argentina the salaries will probably get even lower. His plan was to bike to Argentina and then Russia and then Malaysia. He told me more places and said that was his dream. I was thinking what a lucky guy I would like to do the same, but I feel like I have too many responsibilities. Am I ever a dummy! As I was biking south on the main drag, I saw a Planet Hollywood and Hard rock café. It was the expensive hotel area; I ended up seeing the Crown Plaza Hotel and looked on the sheet of paper Andrea gave me with the name and address of the hotel she would be staying at while in Acapulco. The hotel name was correct, but I did not see the address on the hotel, so I asked the security guard if it was the correct hotel. He told me the hotel I was looking for was way down the

road. I think he looked at me and figured his hotel way too fancy for a dirty man on a bicycle. I continued and noticed the hotel next door was the same address as what Andrea gave me to describe the Crown Plaza hotel. I then asked that security guard and he told me it was the hotel I first asked about. He said both building had the same address, I assumed he was correct and felt a lot better about my ability to find Andrea's hotel when I returned to Acapulco. Towards the south end of town, I started climbing up a big hill, it was a long slow ride. Between the hill and city traffic it took me over 2 hours to get out of Acapulco. When I was on the other side of the hill, I noticed my GPS was turned off, I must have turned it off when I stopped before getting to the top. I often turn it off when I take long brakes to save battery power. What bad luck I did not record the top of the hill (however when I went south with Andrea a few days later I recorded the top of the hill and might someday try to retrofit that data into my data). After getting over the hill the ride was easy, but had lots of bumps (topees), pigs, cows and dogs. I also saw a neat old junked Chevy van on the side of the road. It might have been part of a junk yard. When I arrived in San Marcos I debated on if I had enough day's light to make it the next town, Cruz Grande. I read my lonely planet book and it said there were motels in Cruz Grande so I decided to bike hard and make it there before sundown. When I arrive in Cruz Grande, I found a hotel (might have been the only one in town) near the highway and got a room. The motel was cheap and run down. The sink leaked, no TV and they did not have keys to the rooms. I was a little nervous about leaving my room unlocked, but the lady at the hotel said she would keep an eye on the room. It turns out the lady slept all night in a lawn chair near the main gate in a location where she could keep an eye on all the rooms in the hotel. I walked into town to look for something to eat and noticed everyone was staring at me. I think the town of Cruz Grande almost never had a Gringo walk through it! (Daily bike miles 73.1 miles; 887.84 Total Miles)

Sunday, December 30, 2007

I started biking first thing in the morning. I was out of the motel around 7:20 AM. As I was biking along the highway (a few kilometers before reaching Marquelia) the police had the road partially closed and a police said something that sounded like "imortal". I think he was telling me in Spanish that there was an accident with Fatalities. They wanted me to quickly bike past the accident; they did not want people slowing down to check out the accident. All I could see was a car crashed in a gully. It looked like a pretty bad accident. Later that day I saw a tow truck drive past me with the totaled car hanging from its tow bar. The tow truck had the whole car in the air and the tires were all gone. I stopped to get water and when I was closing the lip of my Camelback, I figured out why I was having trouble with it leaking when it was full. For about 3/4ths of my trip every time I filled my camelback more than 1/2 ways full of water it would leak out and get my back wet. It turned out that the plastic ring near the water bag was sideways in the treads where the cap attached. I forced the ring

over the threads and was able to tighten the cap on enough so it would no longer leak. Boy I should have figured that out a long time ago! Between Marquelia and Juchitán I got my fifth flat tire of this bike trip. This time it looked like the flat was due to the way the guy in Acapulco placed the tube in the rim before filling up the tire after fixing my broken spokes. At one point I stopped and noticed a 12” lizard that was the color of a small crocodile. Since I was not that close to water and the way it ran off, I assumed it was a lizard. When I arrived in Juchitán, I biked through town and then to the bus station. I was trying to set my GPS daily route map when a bus arrived for Acapulco and was not able to package my bike fast enough to get on the bus. The bus driver seemed like he was going to wait, but noticed I had a long distance to go and took off. The bus I missed was a nice fancy, comfortable, new looking bus. I was ready to go by around 1:30 PM and an old beat-up bus for Acapulco arrived at 1:54 PM. The man that loaded my stuff on the bus seemed unhappy that I had a bike, the bike was neatly tied together with the front rim tied to the bike frame. He ended up putting my bike in the storage under the bus and I gave him a 10.00 Peso tip. That seemed to make him happier. The bus was a real Mexican experience. At one bus stop a man with a guitar got on the bus and started playing Mariachis music and looking for tips from the bus passengers. I do not really care for Mariachis music and looked away when he came over towards me. He ended up leaving me alone. The old bus did not seem to have a good clutch, every time the driver took off the gears would grind as he shifted into first gear. The bus arrived in Acapulco a little after 4:00 PM. I put my bike back together and ended up using my GPS (I was not sure where the bus station was in comparison to downtown) to navigate back to the motel (I had it marked on my GPS) where I stayed when I was in Acapulco earlier. Since I knew how to get to Andrea’s hotel (Crown Plaza Hotel) from where I was staying, I was able to easily find the Crown Plaza Hotel. When I went to the reception desk to find Andrea’s room, I was not sure if she was going by Andrea or Gayle. I gave the lady at the reception desk both names and the lady could not find Andrea in the guest list on the computer. Another lady behind the desk heard the name I was asking for and remembered Andrea’s name. She showed the other lady behind the reception desk Andrea’s name on a page in a pile of paper. The lady I was talking to went back onto the computer and said the Andrea had canceled her reservation. The other lady told her to look at the paper again. The lady went back and looked at the paper and finally figured out Andrea’s room number. Then the lady found my name as a possible guest to stay with Andrea and charged me an extra \$30.00 a night to stay in her room as a second occupant. I went up to her room and found that she left a note saying that she was visiting a church. I took a shower and hung out for a little time. I was waiting for Andrea thinking we could go to the cliff diving together, but I figured it was getting too late and I wanted to get my gear from the Hotel California. Around 8:08 PM I decided to go to the hotel California and get the gear I had stored there. I cycle to the hotel and could not find Kevin. Then I asked for Puswel (the other name Kevin gave

me to get my gear if he was not around). They told me that Puswel was at the motel where I had stayed. I went over there and found him. He was in the middle of fixing a plumbing problem in one of the rooms so I had to wait until he was done. Then I had to wait for him to smoke a cigarette. It seemed to take a long time before I was able to get my gear. Then I biked back to the Crown Plaza Hotel and Andrea was waiting for me with a driver. She hired someone to driver her around for the day. She paid the guy \$50.00 to driver her around all day. Seemed like a good deal! Andrea had found a place where I was supposed to park my bike and I told her no. I then took the bike to her room with my gear. I figured I had my bike in the room before and no one was monitoring the elevator. I would rather have my bike in the room so I can keep an eye on it. After putting my stuff in Andrea's room, I went back down the elevator and we got in the car that was driving Andrea around. The guy was very nice (I guess Andrea had met him when he greeted her at the airport to tell her how to get to the Crown Plaza Hotel – I'm not sure maybe he gave her a ride to the hotel as part of his job). He took us to see the cliff divers, I told him about the motel I was staying at and he said Kevin and Puswel were his friends. After the show we went back to the hotel and watched TV before going to sleep. (Daily bike miles 51.75 miles; Max speed 27.0 MPH; Average speed 9.3 MPH; 939.59 Total Miles)

Monday, December 31, 2007

Andrea had pre-registered for a trip to Taxco and tried contacting the tour group several times the day before, but no one answered. She booked the trip from Portland and wanted to confirm the trip and see if I could also join the trip. The hotel people said they would show up at 6:30 AM so we went to the front of the hotel hoping I could get on the tour as well. No one showed up Andrea tried contacted them several times (she was having the hotel receptionist call the number) and she was finally able to reach someone at the tour agent office, we ended out waiting for 2 hours. The person said the tour had already left and when they searched, they were able to find Andrea's reservation. They apologized and offered to let her go on the tour the next day. Since we were leaving the next day Andrea told them it was not possible and the lady at the tour agency said they would try to get her on another tour. The travel agency said she would call Andrea back in a couple of hours. Since I had plenty of time before we would know if she could get on another tour I decided to eat at McDonalds and bike to the Fort. The receptionist at the hotel said the fort (Fuerte De San Diego) was closed. I figured they thought it was closed because it was New Year's Eve day and I decided to bike over there to see if it was really closed. Well, it was closed since it was Monday and it was closed every Monday. I'm not sure if the fact that it was New Year's Eve Day made any difference. I biked a little farther alone the road (La Costera road) and found all the traffic was gone. The roads in Acapulco are normally very challenging to bike because of all the traffic. In order to bike through the traffic, I had to lane split and it seemed dangerous, but it was probably

very safe because everyone seems to watch for things coming on to the road from every direction. Well, the reason the road was empty was because two buses got too close together and collided, it looked like they could not get separated and all the traffic was backed up behind them. Well, I got on the main road with no traffic and happily biked back towards the Crown Plaza hotel. A few blocks latter the main road intersected with another main roads and the traffic became bumper to bumper again. I went back to the hotel and Andrea had gotten a call back from the tour agent and was waiting for a second call to confirm that we would be able to get on an alternate tour. Since she had pre-paid, she was not able to get paid back for the difference in the cost of her original trip and new lower cost trip. They said they could reduce the cost of my fare by the difference in the cost of the two trips. Andrea also had a coupon for a discount and when she used that I did not have to pay anything for my portion of the tour. The tour started out by visiting a coconut plantation where we got big drinks called coco loco with lots of alcohol in a hollowed-out coconut. Andrea ended up buying one of their hand made hammocks. Next the tour took us to Coyuca Lagoon. This is the lagoon where Rambo II was filmed. The tour ended up taking us around the lagoon on a grassed roof boat. We stopped at a Mexican farm that was on the lagoon. They had a dock and we all got off the boat. A few of the people on the boat got their faces covered in what they called a mask (looked like mud). I think the mask was intended to rejuvenate the skin. One lady ended up getting her whole body (minus the bikini area) covered with the mask. The mask did not look very neat to me! They also had coconuts carved with iguanas on the top, now I liked that so I bought one. Then we went back to the tour van in the boat. Next, they took us to a beach front open air restaurant with a swimming pool. I don't think it was a regular restaurant it seemed more like a place where people could go to the beach on someone's private land and if they wanted to they could also get food and drinks. Most of the people were laying in lawn chairs in the shad on the beach. The meal was served buffet style with chicken, salad, tacos, rice, chili and beans. They also had unlimited alcoholic drinks. I had a few Pina coladas and beers. Some of the people went into the ocean and I decided to go for a swim. There were some big waves hitting the shore and in order to get beyond the waves I needed to dive under the waves and come up on the other side. After a little swimming I decided to body surf back to the beach. It didn't work really well I kept riding these waves that smashed me into the sand. I think the alcohol was clouding my mind because I kept trying the body surfing and each time, I ended up getting smashed against the sand by the waves. The tour took us back to the Hertz office near the Crown Plaza Hotel. We looked into getting our rental car from there instead of the airport and they said it would take longer to get it there. Then we walked back to the Crown Plaza Hotel and I took a long shower. After my long shower there was still sand in my ears from being pounded into the beach by the waves. After my shower Andrea and I walked along the main road looking for a place to eat dinner. We walked a long distance I wanted to find the Hard Rock Café. Andrea

was complaining about how her feet started hurting. Every restaurant was very crowded and we could not decide on which restaurant. We finally decided to get take home sandwiches at the subway restaurant. Well, the man at the subway said they did not have enough bread to make us sandwiches. Then a couple of people in the line left and that meant they had enough bread to make us sandwiches. They had bread in the oven, but it was not close to being done. I guess they did not plan out the New Year's Eve rush very well! Next, we stopped at a liquor store. Andrea wanted to get a bottle of wine, but we did not have a cork screw. They had one for sale, but Andrea did not want to buy it and they offered to open the wine with the cork screw. Well, the cork screw broke off in the cork. It ended up taking a long time for the man in the store to figure out how to get the cork out of the bottle. He ended up having to go to a bar down the road and having them get the cork out. We went back to our room with our food and ate dinner while watching TV. Around midnight the fireworks started. There were several large fireworks displays along the beach. There were even a few over the main town. One set of large fireworks were being launched at the beach right under our room. Since Andrea's room was on the 27th floor we had a great view of all the fireworks. After the show we could hear loud music all night long. They really like to celebrate New Year's Eve in Acapulco! (Daily bike miles 7.4 miles; Max speed 22 MPH; Average speed 7.4 MPH; 946.99 Total Miles)

Tuesday, January 1, 2008

We took a taxi from the Crown Plaza Hotel to the airport to pick up our rental car from the Hertz office. We left the Hotel around 7:00 AM and arrived at the airport around 7:45 AM. When we got to the airport, they found Andrea's reservations differed from the reservations on the Hertz computer. Her reservations said she would pick up the car at 8:00 AM for 6 days. Their computer had a pick-up time of noon and duration of one day. When Andrea talked with the Hertz agent, they sounded like they might not even be able to get us a car. Since she had already pre-paid, we were hesitant to try another car company. I did check with the other car rental agencies and Euro Car had one very small car available. Andrea went back to the Hertz agent and was able to get them to say they would have a car very soon. We finally got a car around 10:40 AM and then we started driving south. The drive south was long and interesting. Every time we came to a place that had people living near it there would be topees (speed bumps). It seemed like we never went more than 20 miles without another topee and often they came in groups. A couple of times we hit the topees without seeing them and received big jolts. We also had to deal with animals and people on the main highway. Some of the traffic was slow and it seemed custom to pass slow vehicle when there was a chance of oncoming car appearing on a blind hill. I made a few dangerous passes, but nothing too bad. I saw a few cars passing on blind hills forcing oncoming cars to slow down to prevent head on collisions. In addition, we went through 3 military stops and 2 of the stops lightly searched us. Both stops the

military people seemed amused with my iguana coconut shell bank. The funny thing is I pointed to the opening where money could be removed from the coconut and neither military stop opened the door to search inside the coconut shell. Seems odd since one time on my bike they opened everything including my vitamin jars. We stopped in the town of Pinotepa Nacional looking for the market. We ended up getting groceries and a couple of people asked what we were doing in that town. I guess they were not used to seeing gringos. We checked out the town's fancy church and when I left Andrea to get a photo a man started talking to her. After taking photos I went over to talk with Andrea and the man. The man was very friendly. He said at one time he lived in Long Beach, California for 12 years. The drive to Barceló Hotel seemed to take forever, we arrived slightly after midnight. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; 946.99 Total Miles)

Wednesday, January 2, 2008

Andrea and I had a slow start that day. Finally, I decided to take a bike ride and went through Santa Cruise and continued to the end of road. Then I came to a guard near a dirt road. I was trying to figure out if I could bike on the dirt road. It was blocked by a cable that was locked to a post to close the road. The road guard was giving me instructions in Spanish and I thought he told me to keep right. Another man that spoke English and was listening told me the road guard was telling me to always go left on intersecting roads or I would end out on a road that didn't really go anywhere. I then picked my bike up and stepped over the cable with my bike. I cycling the nice quiet secluded dirt road. I saw a few people walking to the beach at Bahia Cacaluta. I stopped to take a photo and I could hear a vehicle coming down the road. Then about 10 people on ATV (3 wheelers) passed me on the dirt road, they really dusted me out for a few minutes. A little before I got to the Bahia Cacaluta beach, I saw the person from the wired closed road that spoke English and his Girl friend arrive in front of me on this dirt road that looked like it went through someone's farm. I figured they must have taken a short cut (they arrived in the same amount of time as it took me to ride my bike). It didn't make any since that they could go all that distance in such a short amount of time, maybe it was not the same people. However, I'm pretty sure it was the same people. I continued to cycle until I arrived at a secluded beach and found it very nice. The Bahia Cacaluta beach was opened to camping and there were about 20 tents set up. I noticed about 3 cars had been allowed to drive the dirt road to the beach. One of the vehicles was a Hummer. There were probably only about 75 people on the beach that covered about 500 feet of beautiful ocean sandy beaches. It was a very nice beach area and a lot less crowded than the popular beaches. I saw a lot of very small interesting sand crabs on the Bahia Cacaluta beach. The trail to Bahia Cacaluta beach had some nice canopy and passed by a neat fruit farm (I think they were growing papayas – I have a photo and search the internet – looks like papayas). I also went by a jungle home and it did not seem like I was supposed to be there, but I did see other

people walking to and from Bahia Cacaluta beach on the roads. On the way back I thought about trying the road where I saw the person that spoke English at the guarded road and it looked like the road lead through someone's private yard, so I decided to go back the way I came. After leaving the dirt road and cycling up a hill I came to a more crowded beach at Bahia El Organo. Taking a look from a distance it looked like a very crowded beach. I didn't really have much time so I decided not to lock my bike and go down to the beach. I sort of wish that Andrea did not want me back so soon, but I figured I should try to get back. I then went back to the Barceló Hotel and ate a late lunch. Then Andrea and I went shopping in Santa Cruz. Next, we went to check out the lighthouse near Santa Cruz and then the town of Crucecita. Andrea found a lot of stuff she liked. I didn't see anything I wanted in Santa Cruz, but did see a mask that I wanted to buy in Crucecita. I was feeling cheap and did not buy it. At one shop they had salted cooked grasshopper to test, so I tried one. It didn't taste too bad (a little salty and dry)! After shopping we went back to the Hotel and drank alcohol and watched TV. (Daily bike miles 17.41 miles; Max speed 39.5 MPH; Average speed 7.5 MPH; 964.4 Total Miles)

Thursday, January 3, 2008

I tried talking Andrea into driving to Puerto Angel, so I would not have to bike both to and from the town. She was afraid she might not find me and did not feel comfortable driving the Mexican roads. The roads are pretty intimidating and I will admit that it is a little stressful driving the main highway. In the long run I was glad she decided not to go, that way I could get in more miles. The road had a lot of traffic between the Barceló Hotel and the airport. There was no shoulder and it made for stressful biking. I had to go through a military checkpoint just before the turn off to Puerto Angel and they waved me through, they never really looked at me. On the way back the same thing happened. After noticing the checkpoint and thinking about how I left my camping stuff in the car I was glad that Andrea did not decide to drive to Puerto Angel. I cycled down the hill to Puerto Angel and checked out the beach area. It was a nice quiet fishing village. I did see a few Gringos and some resort hotels. However, it seemed a lot more like Mexico than where we stayed. I cycled a little distance up the hill past Puerto Angel and then cycled back to a store in Puerto Angel. I bought some supplies and then cycled back up the hill to the military stop. I went through the stop again without them even giving me a second look. I guess going through the military stops on my bike without any camping gear makes me look more like a local. As I was biking back to the Barceló Hotel a bug landed on my lip and I immediately spit it out. Somehow the bug was able to bite my lip and it got swollen up. The swelling went down throughout the day and by the time I got back to the Hotel you could hardly tell. I'm very lucky when it comes to bug bites the swelling normally goes down very quickly. Andrea is not so lucky, she can get a mosquito bite that stay swollen for a week, me a mosquito bite is ok after a few hours. About 15 miles before getting back

to the Barceló Hotel I found the ideal sized box for my gear for my return flight to the USA. I always have trouble finding boxes, so I can return from a trip. I ended up folding the box and bungee cording it my bike rack. My bike rack was still broken, so I had to stop and wire it up better so I did not damage my bike again. The traffic got heavy again past the airport. When I was about 3.5 miles from the Hotel, I got my sixth flat of the trip and stopped to fix it. It was caused by a small rock (it might have been glass) embedded in my tire. The funny thing is the flat was directly over the patch of another flat. That probably made it tougher to penetrate the tube enough to cause a flat. The place where I stopped to fix my tire had lots of bugs and bees. They were really annoying me. Since it was the third flat for that tube, I decided to trash it. After quickly fixing the flat I finished the ride back to the Barceló Hotel. Back at the Hotel Andrea and I had dinner, drank alcohol and watched a neat movie. We got to sleep a little before midnight. (Daily bike miles 74.45 miles; Max speed 39.5 MPH; Average speed 7.5 MPH; 1038.85 Total Miles)

Friday, January 4, 2008

We woke up at 6:15 AM and went to the front lobby of the motel hoping to get onto the bird watching tour. The previous night we decided to go on the tour too late to sign up. It turned out that no one at our hotel signed up for the trip so the tour van did not show up. We asked at the desk if there was a place where we could check out the birds and they told us at the end of the road we could find a beach that led to the mouth of Rio Copalita. We drove there and found lot of neat birds on the beach and in the river (Rio Copalita). There were lots of vultures on the cliffs. The ocean water where we needed to wade through to get to the other side of the mouth of the river was deep. A man that was fishing waded through a shallow part of the water and signaled us to go that way. The depth of the water at that point was just a little over the knees. We waded through the water and got to an area with more birds. Most of the birds were white and stood between 2 and 3 feet tall. I then waded up river while Andrea stayed at the ocean beach. I ended up seeing a few neat grey colored birds and small sand crabs. We spent about 3 hours at the mouth of the river and then returned to the hotel. Then we ate lunch. Next, I wrote postcards while Andrea went swimming. We then checked out some snorkeling gear (a mask and fins) which is included (no additional charge) when you stay in the all-inclusive Barceló Hotel. The snorkeling was very nice and I found some neat abalone shells. There were some Mexican near the rocks that we snorkeled around that had collected abalone and lobster. We ate some more at the Hotel and then I took Andrea to Santa Cruse for more shopping. I had enough shopping and walked to the waterfront and found a lot of people from the Cruise boat that was docked in the small town. I then found Andrea and we went to the town of Crucecita. I wanted to get a photo of the church but it was closed. I then checked out the mask that I saw there 2 days earlier. I tried talking them down slightly in the cost and they said no. I left for a while and then

returned to give them the full price for the mask. I was only trying to talk them down by 20.00 Pesos (about \$2.00 US). I also found the church was open and I was able to get a couple of photos. I tried getting money at the ATM, but found I forgot my ATM card at the Hotel. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; 1038.85 Total Miles)

Saturday, January 5, 2008

This was our last day at the resort and we really needed to get started north in order to make our flights home the following day. Andrea found the person she wanted to buy a blanket from at the beach behind the Hotel. The blanket that Andrea wanted to buy was already sold. He had one that I really liked so I bought it. I finished packing the car and then we went to the shops across from the hotel. I tried finding an ATM and they told me where I could find one. I went to the ATM to try withdrawing money and the ATM was not working. We then started driving North, we went through the first military stop and they decided to search us. They looked through stuff and wanted to see if we had money. I thought they may have been looking for a bribe. I tried to figure that out with jesters, but they shook their heads no. I ended up showing them my wallet with the small number of pesos I still had left (probably equivalent to about \$30.00 US dollars). Since I have limited Spanish and they spoke limited English it was tough talking. They let us go with a light search after they determined we had Mexican money and was on vacation. There were 2 more military stops and neither one of them stopped to search us. After that first military stop where they searched us, we drove to Puerto Angel and checked out the beach for a few minutes. We tried finding an ATM in Puerto Angel and they said there were none. We continued along the beach to the small beach town of Zipolite, checking out the beach we found it was a nude beach. Andrea found it described in her Lonely Planet book and it sounded like a place that was not popular among the locals. Later we saw a group of 5 touring cyclists traveling north on highway Mex 200. I was surprised at how close the bikes were together, maybe they just took off from a break. We continued and stopped in Pinotepa Nacional to look for an ATM. I asked at a motel and no one seemed to know where an ATM was located. A lady listening gave me directions to a hospital with an ATM, but I could not find it. We continued without money. When we arrived in Cruz Grande, I tried buying gas with either US money or a Credit card and they said they would only take Mexican money. I continued to San Marcos and found a gas station that took credit cards. They did not seem very accustomed to taking credit cards, their pin did not work and you could not see my signature. When I returned to Portland, I received a call for the Credit Card fraud company and they wanted to verify that gas purchase. They said that the gas station did not use the correct protocol when charging my credit card. Well, they got their money and no extra charges ended up on my credit card. We kept looking for this big motel we saw when we headed south, somehow, we passed it and ended up at a hotel in the town of San Marcos. At that point we were very close to Acapulco and that made me feel better about catching our

flight the next. The flight was not until the following afternoon, but I like to make sure I have plenty of time. You never know how long it will take to check in with a bike. The motel was \$35.00 US per night with a fan (Andrea wanted all the extras – we could have gotten the room without the Fan and TV for \$25.00). After settling into our room, we walked around looking for food, Andrea was complaining about my choices and we finally bought some snacks and ate back in the hotel room. She also complained about all the drunken men staring at us as we walked through town. I heard one guy say something like Pandahoe and that he wanted to screw Andrea. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; 1038.85 Total Miles)

Sunday, January 6, 2008

We loaded the car and headed to the Acapulco airport, we really only made one stop to look at a river village. When I arrived at the airport, they would not take my bike the way I had it packaged. I had the front tire removed and the tire tied to the bike as well as the handle bar removed and tied to the bike. Normally when I leave a foreign country, I can get away with flying the bike without a bike box. The man that seemed like the supervisor at Mexicana airlines was the only one that said I needed to put the bike in a box. He was a real drag! He told me there were no boxes and I kept insisting that I needed help. Finally, he sent one of the people that searched bags to find me boxes. The guy came back with 3 small boxes; he had some strapping tape and helped me wrap my bike in cardboard. I went to check my bike a second time and the lady was ready to put it on the conveyer belt when the supervisor showed up and said it had to be covered with more cardboard. We had one more piece of cardboard and I taped that around my bike. Then the man finally let them check in my bike. I found an ATM at the airport and got money for me and Andrea for the flight home. My flight to Mexico City was a little delayed and when I arrived in Mexico City, I was planning on doing a city tour. It seemed like it might take too long. Since I only had 4 hours and did not know what I wanted to see and do in Mexico City I figured I would spend my time in the Mexico City Airport. It was fun since I like new airport and had to spend the rest of my Mexican money. When I first arrived in Mexico City, they told me my departure flight was from gate 19. I bought a bottle of “Sauza Tequila” and Kahlua Especial”. I kept checking out the monitor for my flight and it said gate 19, but it had a later time. I decided to buy another bottle of liquor and they told me they could not sell it to me because my flight was ready to leave. I went back to gate 19 and it still had the wrong time (it showed a latter takeoff time). I asked about the flight at the gate and they said my flight was leaving from gate 32 and that I needed to run to catch my flight. I ran to the gate and it had not started loading yet, but it was about to load. I watched a movie on the flight back to Portland and tried to stay awake for most of the flight back. I wanted to be able to sleep when I returned to Portland. I did get a few hours of sleep on my flights and still slept fine when I returned to Andrea’s place in Portland. When I got off the plane in Portland, I arrived in an area that I had

never seen, I went through customs and then I was bused over to the normal PDX terminal. After going through customs, I noticed that I had left my “Baja Land Deals Real Estate Mexico” baseball hat in the plane. I asked about it and they told me when I returned to the main terminal, I could ask for them to retrieve it. Since it was late and Andrea and Andors were picking me up at the airport I decided to forget about the hat. The hat was the only item that I had lost during this entire trip. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; 1038.85 Total Miles).

Monday, January 7, 2008

I woke up at 6:50 AM, took a shower and I was at work by about 8:00 AM. End of trip!