

# **Biking Florida 2011/2012**

## **Day 1-4, December 24-27, 2011**

Linda gave me a ride to the airport. Then I boarded a plane to Albuquerque to see my mom. I slept for most of the flight and arrived in Albuquerque around 5:00 PM. I called my mom from the runway and she picked me up. While in Albuquerque I went with my mom to old town and to check out Christmas light. I visited Tony Jaramillo on Christmas night. The day after Christmas I visited my old high school friend Jim Gardner. I had not seen Jim for 20 years, I found him on Facebook and it was nice seeing him again. At about 6:20 AM on December 27 mom and I boarded a plane to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Once in Fort Lauderdale we picked up a rental car. Originally, we were going to take a shuttle to Key West, but it seemed like it would be easier to rent a car and I figured we had time to check things out on the way to Key West. Well, the line to pick up the rental car took over an hour and by the time we actually left the airport most of the afternoon was gone. Once in the rental car we drove to Key West. We only stopped one time on the way down to check out the scenery. We also stopped for dinner near Marathon Key. It turns out it would have been better, faster and cheaper to take the shuttle. When we arrived in Key West, I was able to find where I thought the condo key would be without any trouble, however I did not see the Truman fountain. I had read the instruction on how to get the Condo keys the previous night and it said they would be in a lock box across from Truman fountain. I assumed I figured things out wrong when I did not see a fountain and looked very close at the instructions and back tracked. On the road near the guard shack, we asked someone where we could find the Compass Realty office (that was the office where our Condo Key was in a lock box). They explained the exact spot I originally found. We went back parked the car and it was the building with our key. I still did not see the fountain, the next day I went back and found the fountain. Apparently, it is off at night and that was why I did not see it in the first place. Then we got the key and instruction to the Condo, it was confusing and it took a while to find the Condo. We had to get a code from the guard shack to get into the locked compound. Once we settled into the Condo, I put my bike together and cycled around. I found the southernmost point in the continental USA and a person pulled up on a motorcycle. He was with his girlfriend and we were the only ones there. He offered to take my picture with my camera and I had him take the photo. That was the only time while in Key West that I saw the southernmost point uncrowded. It was probably close to midnight. Then I biked back to the condo. (Biked 9.91 miles)

## **Day -5, Wednesday, December 28, 2011**

I biked all the way around the island of Key West. Then I drove over to the airport with my mom to pick up Jay. We bought groceries and then returned to the Condo. Then I filled up the rental car with gas, returned it and biked back to the Condo. I

cycled around and saw most of the sights of Key West from the outside. Then I went back to the Condo to join Jay and mom in a walk around town. We stopped at a bar and had a couple interesting fruit drinks. (Biked 22.4 miles; Total bike miles 32.31)

#### **Day -6, Thursday, December 29, 2011**

I biked around looking for the best deal on a city trolley tour; there were 2 companies that provided the city tours. I went back to the Condo to tell Jay and mom the options. We ended up going with the City View Trolley. It was only \$19.00 a person the others were more expensive. Jay, mom and I did the city tour of Key West. We had lunch at Bo's Fish Wagon, the restaurant that has an old truck on a corner. The truck is the original truck used to start his restaurant. Jay rented a bike and we cycled to the Whistler bar and had a drink. I checked out the clothing optional part of the bar, it was a little different and I decided it was not for me. (Biked 15.8 miles; Total bike miles 48.11)

#### **Day -7, Friday, December 30, 2011**

We started the day by going to the Casa Marina Hotel where Daniel was getting married and hanging out at the beach. I meet my cousin Daniel for the first time. He was getting married to Page and that was why my mom wanted to go to Key West, Florida. The motel was very nice and I felt out of place. It seemed like all the rich people were wondering why I was there. After the motel mom, Jay and I went on a boat ride to snorkeling out at the nearby reef. It was a very nice trip. We saw a lot of neat fish and a few big lobsters. However, the water was not as clear as I remember it when I went diving there over 20 years ago. I biked all the way around the island again and checked out the beaches. I saw 2 bike Fridays locked up near the beach, but could not figure out who owned the bikes. That evening we cooked a spaghetti dinner. I ended out getting a lot of gas from the dinner. (Biked 13.19 miles; Total bike miles 61.3)

#### **Day -8, Saturday, December 31, 2011**

We started the day by going to the Casa Marina Hotel and hanging out at the beach. Then we got ready for the wedding, we were told that we could wear shorts and t-shirts. It turned out that everyone else at the wedding was in a suit and tie. Jay was mad that they told us the wrong dress attire, but I was glad that I was able to dress comfortable and not have to lug extra cloths to Florida. Page, the bride commented on she was glad that we dressed in shorts and wanted everyone to dress like we did. The ladies in the wedding went bare foot, so why not let us be in shorts! It was New Years Eve and we watched the Drag Queen get dropped in the red slipper. It was a big, crowded event. I was with Aunt Anita and she hated the crowds, I ended up following her as she pushed her way through the crowd to get back to her motel. Several people in the crowd were mad at us for pushing through. I was following Anita and would

say I needed to keep up with my mom when people cursed at me. After I made sure Anita made it through the crowd and was safe, I went back through the crowd to get a good spot to check out the Drag Queen drop. Anita is almost 80 years old and has amazing strength! Later Linda told me she saw the Drag queen drop in Key West on the national news. (Biked 3.15 miles; Total bike miles 64.45)

### **Day -9, Sunday, January 1, 2012**

I went to the Casa Marina Hotel to visit Aunt Anita (Daniel's mom) and cousin Daniel (he was the one that was married the previous day). Jay and Cousin Tracy also went and we all sat on the beach for about an hour. I felt pretty bored, Jay and Tracy stayed at the Hotel's beach. I biked around the island of Key West 2 times. (Biked 29.64 miles; Total bike miles 94.09)

### **Day 10, Monday, January 2, 2012**

I ended out going to the Butterfly and nature conservatory. No one else wanted to go, the butterflies were very neat and there were also some neat little birds. I sent the rejection letter to Kathleen for the house I put a bid in on before leaving Portland. I wished I was not on vacation; the house was a great opportunity. It was just too hard to figure out while on vacation, the place we stayed at in Key West did not have internet access and I had trouble with the internet at the Internet Cafe. I also had trouble sending a fax from the internet Café, my realtor was very helpful. She could have helped, but I just did not need that kind of stress while on vacation, big mistake on my part! Jay made me feel concerned about my earnest money for the house. So, I called the realtor and she said they never actually got the check and the rejection letter was just a formality (on the rejection letter it talks about how the bidder may be liable to pay part of the earnest money). In the afternoon I went to the beach near Fort Zachary with Cousin Tracy. She sat on the beach while I rented snorkeling gear and checked out the fish. She went for a 30-minute swim as well. The fish at this beach were not as plentiful or colorful as the ones at the reef (when we went on the snorkeling from the boat with mom). However, there were some fish that were a lot bigger than anything I saw from the boat trip. By the time I was ready to return my snorkel gear some big dark clouds were headed our way. Everyone was leaving the beach and so did Tracy. I stayed at the state park and checked out the fort before it closed. It was a neat fort with cannons and old-style rooms. I then biked half way around the island before returning to the Condo. (Biked 23.22 miles; Total bike miles 117.31)

### **Day 11, Tuesday, January 3, 2012**

Mom, Jay and Tracy left the condo a little after 8:00 AM. I returned the Condo Keys and then biked to the start of Highway 1 to get a photo of the start of my bike journey. I left Key West around 9:00 AM and started biking south. I forgot to reset my GPS and did not get my track started until 16 miles north of Key West on highway 1. When

I was biking through Marathon the screw holding the trailer to the back of my bike fell off. The trailer became disconnected from the bike and scrapped along the ground. Luckily, I was on the sidewalk and not on the road. I could not find the lost screw. I had an extra screw that I was able to use. A man on a bike asked if I needed help and suggested getting super glue or lock tight to make the new screw stay in place. The man told me about the local homeless shelter where I could stay with meals for \$10/night. He was headed towards the homeless shelter and told me I could follow him. I told him I was headed north and he asked if I needed any money. He also suggested that I could get food stamps and stay at churches while traveling in Florida. I think the man thought I was homeless. That day was windy and cold for Florida. That night they were expecting a low of 44 F. It was cold that night and I stayed at the Jolly Roger's campground north of Marathon. Several people at the campground warned me that the night would be cold. My sleeping bag kept me warm and I slept fine that night. (Biked 63.52 miles; Total bike miles 180.83)

### **Day 12, Wednesday, January 4, 2012**

I left camp at around 8:00 AM. I stopped in a tourist souvenir area and saw this old guy loaded with stuff on a junky bike. He had stuff strapped on his back and more stuff in a basket on the rear rack. I talked to him for a while and he claimed to have biked from Seattle to the Florida Keys. He talked about biking all over the USA. He said he cycled over 22 thousand miles on his bike. His tire patches did not look very good, but I guess he had a lot of time and it is possible that he was legitimate. He had a cheap Wal-Mart pump that he says breaks every few months and he return it for a new one. He told me how to take highway 1 through Miami and I followed his suggestions. The guy was asking about the homeless shelter in Key West. I did not know, but told him I heard there was one in Marathon Key. That evening at the campground I stayed in at Key Largo I told these guys about the man I met on the bike. They told me about this homeless man that bikes through the keys and it sounded like he may have been the man I met on the bike that claimed to have biked from Seattle. Their description of how his bike and luggage was set up seemed like the same guy, but they said he looked Asian and this guy did not look Asian to me. My GPS mount was broken and fell off my bike 2 times that day. The second time it fell off I was bouncing on the grass to get off the road and on to the safety of the sidewalk. That time a man in a dump truck was honking and pointing behind me. I stopped to try to figure out what he was pointing at and found he was pointing at my GPS that had just fallen off my bike. I didn't even know I lost it that time, thanks dump truck man! Some of the Key bridges had bridges adjacent to the car bridges used for biking and hiking. Some of the bridges did not go all the way from Key to Key. I took one bridge and it dead ended, I had to bike back the way I came. When I got back to the end of the bridge, I looked for a sign or something to tell me the bridge was a dead-end bridge, no sign. I stayed in a campground at Key Largo and then biked

around town (I biked most of the way to highway 1 turn off) and to the state park. At the state park a man on a cheap looking bike wanted to trade me for my Bike Friday and I said no. He said he was just joking and he wanted to know more about my bike. He had heard about the Bike Friday and was trying to buy a used one. He commented that no one wants to sell their Bike Fridays for cheap. I told him I really like the bike and he seemed to want to get one too. That evening at the campground I met a friendly man named Richard from Ohio. He liked to talk a lot. He told me he stayed at that campground for 6 months a year and the other 6 months he was a grounds keeper at a golf course in Ohio. That evening I called my Uncle Joe to tell him I would be at his place a couple of days. (Biked 55.41 miles; Total bike miles 236.24)

### **Day 13, Thursday, January 5, 2012**

I got a flat tire and fixed it. Then I cycled highway 1 into Miami, there was a lot of traffic and several cars honked at me and requested that I got off the road. A man in a city vehicle asked what I was doing in the high traffic lane. I was on the thin shoulder on the right side of the road and cars could easily get passed me in the same lane. People are very annoying to cyclists on highway 1 in Miami. The only real sensible chose was to take highway 1 or spend several hours making your way through side streets. There was really no danger, it is just a small shoulder and the trailer I was toeing takes up extra room. Panniers would have been easier on this part of the route. The sidewalks were rough on the way into Miami, but leaving Miami it was easy to use the sidewalks and that's what I did. I was in downtown Miami by 2:00 PM and back on the road by 3:00 PM. I really did not want to see anything in Miami and wanted to get out of the traffic area. I should have probably taken A1A out of Miami, highway 1 is mostly for cars and highway A1A follows the beaches with more cyclists and nicer scenery. At about 4:00 PM I started looking for a cheap motel. I didn't find anything until 5:00 PM. The first 2 motels looked really run down and the third one looked OK. It was expensive, but I wanted to be safe so I stayed there. They had a sign that said no illegal behavior, the police would be called. I figured it was a good motel. There were a number of single women staying at the hotel. They did not look like hookers, but the next night my uncle said there were a lot of hookers in that area. So they may have been attractive young hookers. Also, the events of the evening made me believe the ladies next to me where hookers and the guy was their pimp. At the motel I checked my GPS and found I only had another 6 miles left to get to Fort Lauderdale, if I would have known that I would have continued to Uncle Joe's place. I called Joe to tell him I would be at his place around 10 AM the following day. I had a hamburger from the nearby 7-11 and it gave me a bad stomach ache, but I was fine by the morning. That night the people next to me were arguing all night and then it sounded like the guy was throwing the girl against the wall. The people next door were still arguing at 4:00 AM, bad night of sleep. Worst ever! Later that night I saw a hand reach into the missing window pain on my motel door and reaching to unlock

the door. I yelled hey and they replied oh someone is in there and they left. Also, I could hear what sounded like motel managers threaten to throw the people out of the motel and the ladies sounded very sad about getting thrown out. I can easily say that was the worst night I have ever had in a motel. (Biked 77.1 miles; Total bike miles 313.34; GPS miles 160.7 + 16)

### **Day 14, Friday, January 6, 2012**

When I left the hotel at 7:20 AM, the lady looked at me and said on no. I think she knew it was a bad night, I should have complained. Instead, I just went on my merry old way. I cycled mostly on the sidewalks, it was not too bad, but very slow. I arrived at Uncle Joe and Aunt Margie's place around 10:00 AM. Joe and Margie wanted to know if I needed anything and I told them I needed to find a new GPS back cover. We searched all over Fort Lauderdale for a replacement GPS mounting cover and had no luck. I had already looked at the boating's store and a sporting goods store. I bought something with Velcro at the dollar store thinking I could use it to hold the GPS in place. It just did not seem to work. It was too thick to close into the GPS case. Towards the end of my trip, I found I could hold the GPS in place with a thick rubber band that I found on the side of the road. After the dollar store, we went back to Uncle Joe and Aunt Margie's place for lunch. After lunch they took me to Fort Lauderdale beach, I tried paying for stuff but they would not let me. My camera had not been working well, it finally completely quit working at Fort Lauderdale beach. I was only able to use my cell phone to get photos at the beach, I wish I would have remembered to bring the camera Linda bought for me. At the beach it seemed like it would have been fun to have a drink, but there was no way I would let Uncle Joe buy me a drink and I don't think they would have let me pay, so I did not suggest it. The beach was very nice with a lot of great people watching. Then we went back to Joe's place for a while. I went through my biking gear and reorganized it. I also used black electric tape to hold my GPS onto the bike mount. Then we went out to dinner at an Italian restaurant. Again, they would not let me pay. I have plenty of money I wish they would have let me buy them dinner! (Biked 18.51 miles; Total bike miles 331.85; GPS miles 178.51 + 16)

### **Day 15, Saturday, January 7, 2012**

As I was biking back to the main route, I found a Best Buy store and bought a new Cannon camera. I also looked for a new GPS mount, but no luck again. My trailer seemed to be swaying a lot and I stopped at a beach where I noticed the trailer mount had broken and it was only half way held on. Luckily, I had bought a new mount that was not very well fit to the bike and used it. I taped on the mount and tightened the screws. There was a cut battery cable in the mount to take up the slack for the oversized mount. I bought the mount from Bike Friday, but it had way too much slack for any bike. I hoped the rigged-up trailer hitch would makes it for the rest of the trip!

I had another flat, the tires that come with the Bike Friday have no protective belt and any little things would go through the tire and cause a flat. The spare tire I had was the old tire from my other Bike Friday and it looked like it had a belt, but it was pretty worn down. I decided to put the older tire on the bike. I cycled on A1A most of the time and it was lined with huge Ocean front mansions. There were also smaller mansions on the river side of the road. The river side homes had personal boat docks and lots of them had huge Yachts. When I first arrived in West Palm Beach, it reminded me a little of Detroit (but not quite that bad), lots a vacant building and some hookers. There were cheap hotels, but I did not want to go through that again, so I continued. It was a long distance before I got to nicer areas. I ended out making it past West Palm Beach which is the end of the Miami outskirts. I went another 15 miles and the sun was setting. When I arrived at Juno beach, I looked for camping, but had no luck. I started heading north and realized nothing would be there and the sun was already set, so I headed back to Juno Beach and stayed at the expensive Hamilton Inn. It was a very nice room and the lady gave me a \$10 discount. I walked out to the beach and was a very beautiful night. No one was on the beach and the stars were very nice. (Biked 70.14 miles; Total bike miles 401.99; GPS miles 248.53 + 16)

### **Day 16, Sunday, January 8, 2012**

I was told by Uncle Joe that Ft Pierce was a bad town, but it seemed a lot better than South Palm Beach. I biked on Highway 1 until just north of Ft Pierce and then I was able to get onto A1A. A1A is a better road for biking and I cycled all the way to Vero Beach. When I arrived in town, I used my GPS to find motels and called a few of them for their nightly rates. A couple of ladies asked me about my trip and suggested places I might stay. They were saying I could sleep in a vacant lot and told me where it was. In the old days I would have done that, but I figure now I can afford the motel and decided to stay at the Islander Inn. Once at the motel the lady that ran the hotel seemed to want to tell me everything about town, very nice lady. The lady seemed to never stop talking, I just wanted to get away from her, so I could check out the beach. I walked a long distance on the beach and watched the sun set. Then a full moon rose over the ocean, it was a beautiful night of solitude. Then I went to the small store and went back to the motel. That night I had tuna sandwiches and watched TV. (Bike miles 64.27 miles; Total bike miles 466.26; GPS miles 312.56 + 16)

### **Day 17, Monday, January 9, 2012**

I woke up early and went to the beach to watch the sun rise. Then I went back to the motel, packed my stuff and was back on the road a little before 8:00 AM. At Sebastian State Park the head ranger, Terry, came over to ask me about my bike ride. He told me he had bike toured Europe, Australia and throughout North America a few years back. He wanted to get back into bike touring and said whenever he sees people touring on bikes, he talks to them about their biking experience. He was thinking about a Bike

Friday and I told him I liked mine a lot. My only real complaint is that I prefer pannier over pulling a trailer. The panniers make it easy to stay on the shoulder of roads with small shoulders. However, the trailer is pretty narrow and not as bad as I would have expected. I think it is well worth it when you go on 2-week trips with the start and end location differing. The ranger suggested commando camping (sleeping in bushes or campgrounds and leaving before getting charged or spotted) and he also told me about couch surfing. He had a card related to sponsoring couch surfing. He told me that he had biker camp sites that he designated and that he would never turn down a biker at his camp site. Too bad I still wanted to make some miles. He said his biker camping was only \$5.00/ night instead of the regular campground \$20/ night price tag. There were a lot of mosquitoes at the area, it was the only place I remember mosquitoes on this trip to Florida. I was getting eaten alive by the mosquitoes as I was talking with the ranger Terry. The ride on A1A was very nice, I had a tough time finding the campground in Cape Canaveral. So, I asked about it in a bike shop and the guy gave me good direction to Jetty Park campground, but I still had to ask at a bar when I was very close. I camped at Cape Canaveral 's Jetty Point Park that night. I thought I was right next to Kennedy Space center. It turned out to be just on the other side of the canal, but the only way to get there was a long distance by road. The lady at the campground printed up directions to Kennedy Space center and felt skeptical about if I could bike there. After talking to the lady at the campground I felt like I might not be able to go to Kennedy Space center. It turns out her directions to the Space Center were the long way, the next day I found the shortcut and biking was no problem. The lady at the campground first set me up for camping in a park outside the fence of the regular campground and it did not feel very secure or like I was in the campground. I went back to the campground registration and asked her if I could move to the campground and she moved me. She told me it was perfectly safe in the park and it was a nicer place to watch the boats go by. She was probably right but I would have felt nervous leaving my stuff in the park if I biked or hiked around that evening or in the morning. Staying in the regular campsite felt a lot more secure. (Bike miles 59.09 miles; Total bike miles 525.35; GPS miles 370.29 + 16)

### **Day 18, Tuesday, January 10, 2012**

I woke up early and checked out the sun rise. Then I packed up and tried leaving camp, but found I had a flat on the trailer tire. I could not find 2 tire irons. (I actually found them after I returned to Portland). All the bike tire flats I could fix with only 1 tire irons, those tires where not that tight against the rim. The trailer tires are very small and very tight against the rim. I had to use the one tire iron (the one on multi-use tool) I was able to find and a screw driver to remove the trailer tire from the rim. Well, I found the piece of wire that cased the flat patched the tub and put it back together. I think I pinched the tire because after that I had a slow leak. Since it was so hard and took so long to fix the trailer flat, I decided I would continue and buy some



tire fix goop at the next store. As I was following the long route given to me from the lady at the campground to get to Kennedy Space center, I saw a sign saying Kennedy Space Center right and took that road. It probably cut about 5 miles off the ride to Kennedy Space center. The campground lady's route took me off Merritt Island and onto highway 1, the new route let me stay on the island and took route 3. I had to fill the trailer tire with air a couple more times and then found a gas station with emergency tire fix spray goop. The leak was slow so I continued filling it with air and biking before it went low again. A couple of miles before getting to the space center my rear bike tire had another flat, so I decided to use the goop on both my trailer tire (I did not want to run out of goop, the trailer tire was more important) and the bike rear tire. Both tires held out for the rest of the day with the goop. I arrived at Kennedy Space Center around 11:00 AM and stayed there until about 4:00 PM. When I left Kennedy Space Center it was rush hour for people getting off work at the labs and it was not fun biking. No shoulder and lots of traffic. A little before arriving in Titusville I noticed my trailer was wobbly, a close inspection revealed that the spacer between the mount and bike had fallen out. The mount which I bought from Bike Friday was not made for a bike, it had about an inch of extra space. To resolve that issue, I had put a cut taped up battery cable in the gap. That fell out as I was biking. I searched the roads for something to put in the gap and found a round rubber washer. Once in the town of Titusville I looked for a cheap hotel that looked nice. I stayed in the Budget hotel. It was very nice. The man that ran the motel was very nice, he gave me a special rate since I was on a bike. He told me about the wildlife refuge on Merritt Island and places I could eat. He seemed to talk forever. I settled into the motel and then bought a burrito and drink at the 7-11. After eating that I bought some more groceries. I then ate more in my motel room while watching TV. I also tried fixing the trailer hitch with the rubber washer and it just was not big enough. Then I figured out that an AA battery with tape on it would work. I used the battery and tightened down the mount. It worked for the rest of my trip, a few times I had to push the battery back into the gap so it would not fall out. (Bike miles 34.57 miles; Total bike miles 559.92; GPS miles 404.87 + 16)

### **Day 19, Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

I still felt the mosquito bites I got 2 days earlier in Sebastian State Park. Must be an old age thing, normally mosquito bites go away in a few hours. I woke up early so I could see the sun rise from the wildlife refuge on Merritt Island. I was early and took a side road that was a lot further than expected, I could see these Roseate Spoonbill birds in the water, but the sun was still down so I could not get good photos. Then I continued biking and made it to Black Point wildlife drive, it is a 7-mile loop road. I cycled the route and it was great for seeing birds. The neatest birds where the Roseate Spoonbill with their pink feathers (the same type of birds I saw before sunrise). Then I biked back towards the motel and saw a hunters stop, I wanted to ask the rangers if it

was possible to bike the island road and get to highway 1 north of the island, but they were busy talking to a hunter. I figured I could ask the guy at the motel, he said he had lived in the area for several years. I figured he would know the answer. I went back to the motel and packed up my gear. By the time I got back to the motel I had cycled 19.85 miles without my GPS attached to the bike. I checked out of the motel and ask the guy about the road, highway 3, on Merritt Island. He told me I could not take it north because it was Space Center land. I showed him how that land was green (wildlife refuge land) and the other was yellow (Space Center land) on my map. He seemed confident that I could not go that way, I figured he must know what he was talking about. So, I ended up taking the slightly shorter less scenic highway 1. When I got to the north end of the road, I saw a sign that indicated that I could drive back to Black Point Wildlife drive. This made me feel like I really missed something special. I was mad that the guy at the motel was wrong. I did not want to be so close to something neat without seeing it. I figured I would not come back, so I stopped at a rental car agent in New Smyrna beach to rent a car. I then drove back to the park and checked everything out, I really did not miss anything that great, but it would have been great by bike. There was a dolphin swimming in the manatee viewing area and I did not see any manatee. I also saw no alligators in the area where I was told there might be alligators. There were also not that many cool birds, the best part of the wildlife area in my opinion was the Black Point wildlife drive that I had cycled in the morning. I drove by the motel I stayed in at Titusville and thought about staying there, so I could drive the loop again in the morning. My original thought for that night was to stay at Daytona beach, so I drove that way and stayed in a motel. It was not that exciting I think I should have stayed in Titusville. I think one reason I did not stay in the Titusville motel is that I was still a little mad at the man that ran the motel. I ended up staying at a cheap motel on Highway 1 in Dayton, there were a lot of good options. After settling into my motel, I drove to A1A and found there were a few good cheap options there also. I think I would have rather stayed on A1A, even at a slightly higher price. That day my rear bike tire lost some air a couple of times and I refilled it, the tire fix goop seemed to work fine as long as I kept moving. I think the goop that was floating around in the tire self-patches the flat when the tire is rotating. (Bike miles 55.48 miles; Total bike miles 615.4; GPS miles 448.34 + 16)

### **Day 20, Thursday, January 12, 2012**

I drove back to New Symarn along A1A and checked out the neat Daytona light house grounds (before it was open for business). I returned the rental car and started biking towards Daytona Beach. I saw a bicycle touring guy on the other side of the road so I stopped to talk to him. He was from Ireland and he liked to talk a lot. He had been cycling in the US for the past 1.5 years and was headed to Key West. He told me he was always able to bargain on motel rooms, I really do not like bargaining, but on the other hand I do not like paying for motels. We talked for such a long time that the rear

tire went flat again. The trailer tire seems to stay good enough all day, but the bikes rear tire had to be filling every 10 miles or so. I would have liked to fix it later that night, but since this other biker was there, I figured I would fix it right away. He commended on how bad the tire looked. It was my old Bike Friday's tire with the internal belt. I decided to put the original tire back on and use a new tube to speed things up. He asked if I wanted to use some chain lube and I gratefully used some. I did not bring any on this trip since the bike was new and the ride was short. However, the chain was really getting squeaky and needed to be oiled. I was really glad to get the chain lube, I had been thinking for a few days prior about asking a bike shop for just a shot of lube, I really did not want to buy any. I biked A1A through Daytona Beach and cycled on the beach at Daytona for a few miles. It was a very nice beach. After biking along the beach, I was still doing great so I continued biking north. There was a neat State Park with mountain bike trails and hiking/ biking trails at Flagler Beach. I found a campground a little north of the park, it was more like an RV park. I asked about tent camping and the campground manager told me yes for \$11 to \$15/ night. The guy gave me a place behind a trailer and said he would have to charge \$15.00. I could have debated the price, but I figured he needed the money more than I do. I needed a place to plug in my cell phone and he let me plug it into a trailer where the people were gone. The people in the motor home next to me where from Illinois and had been camped there for a few days. They complained because they were told not to plug into the sewer yet and that they might get moved. The lady that owned the campground was supposedly not very friendly and the man that managed it (he gave me my spot and a hand written receipt for camping) seemed afraid of dealing with the lady that owned it. The people from Illinois said the lady that owned the campground was not very nice to the campground manager. There was this handy man, Richard who was 69 years old from somewhere up north that was very friendly. He introduced me to Adam that night and Richard gave me a vodka drink. Richard had a very fat little dog. Adam and his brother made me hot dogs. While eating the second hot dog I bought myself a beer from the bar that was run by the mean lady that owned the campground. She was very attractive and seemed nice to me. The campground bar was full of locals and I believe they would be characterized as hillbillies. Adam was a truck driver and told me stories about his driving carrier. He liked Freightliner trucks and did not like the way Volvos drive. I think his preference was Kenworth trucks, but he was too polite to actually say he liked them better than Freightliner trucks. Adam's passion was music and he believed that someday he may become a famous rock star. (Bike miles 48.26 miles; Total bike miles 663.66)

### **Day 21, Friday, January 13, 2012**

In the morning I biked to the state park's bike/hike trail and then out to the beach. I met a homeless man named Mark on the beach. Mark told me he had biked the 80 miles from Orlando to Flagler beach and now he lived in the woods in the Flagler

beach area. He had only had one real job in the past 4 years and that was with the VA hospital. He told me he did a lot of handyman work for different people in the Flagler Beach area. He was staying at the state park, but the police told him he should not stay there anymore. He made it sound like he had several runs with the police and that they liked him a lot. He was not into drugs, begging or stealing. It seemed like he was a very nice person that was down on his luck. He had a big assist on his inner lip, I did not know what that was so he pulled down his lip and showed me a big swollen bump on his gum. It looked very painful. Since he did not have health insurance he had to live with the pain until the swelling went down on its own. He told me about the other homeless person that camp near him. This other person was from Redford, Michigan and had lost his job and ended out getting a divorce and loosing custody of his kids. This other man was planning on walking back to Detroit. We both agreed the other guy would probably be better off biking to Detroit. I did a little more biking around and found the Publics grocery store. When I was going into the store, I meet a man from Michigan and then I went in and bought some snacks. As I left the store, I saw Mark and he introduced me to the man from Detroit. That was the guy Mark was camping near and the man I meet when I entered the store. The man told me he wanted to walk back to Detroit to get his kids back, he seemed very depressed. That man also seemed like a very nice person that was just down on his luck. I told him that I thought a bike was the way to get back to Detroit and Mark said he was working on getting the Detroit man a bike. The man from Detroit really sounded like he wanted to walk instead of bike, I asked him if he had a route and he said no. I wish I would have suggested the Appalachian trail, that is something I think I would like to do and that would probably be a good trip for that man. I then went back to camp and packing up my stuff. Adam came over and I said bye to him. At about 10:00 AM I started cycling north. I arrived in Saint Augustine around 2:00 PM. I looked for a good deal on a motel, most of the motels would deal a little, but not much since it was a weekend and they were located near the downtown area. I was able to get the AAA discount from the Ramada that brought their price down to a little over the rate of the low-end motels. Since I felt Saint Augustine was a major accomplishment (at that point I had completed my bike ride from Deadhorse Alaska to Key West Florida) I decided to treat myself to staying in the Ramada Inn. Very nice room! I also went to the fort at Saint Augustine and paid to go inside. The Fort is very neat. I then biked all around the town of Saint Augustine and saw most of the sight from the outside. (Bike miles 44.38 miles; Total bike miles 708.04; GPS miles 512.52 + 16)

### **Day 22, Saturday, January 14, 2012**

I biked around the town of Saint Augustine and then went to take the city trolley. I purchased the combo ticket that included the trolley, old jail and museum. I started by checking out the old jail house tour. I got photos of me in two of the jail cells. While in the old jail the batteries died in the camera, the camera battery life is very bad. At

that point I was conserving batteries (I thought I had enough, but my last extra batteries only took a few pictures before they died). I thought I had enough batteries to last the entire trip! After the jail house I bought some batteries and went on the city trolley to learn about the sites in Saint Augustine. I didn't think the trolley was all that informative and I was very cold. I should have worn my rain coat. I did not have enough warm clothes for this trip and when it was really cold, I would need to use my rain gear as an outer layer. There were only a couple of things that I did not already figure out before the trolley tour. Also, since it was so cold on the tour and I dressed to light since I was in Florida, it was not that enjoyable. I had 3 cold days while I was in Florida. In the Keys it got down to 44 F with high winds and it felt very cold. On the 2 cold days in Northern Florida, it got close to freezing (down to about 34 F). After the trolley I went into the Museum. I think the only part of my combo tour (old Jail, Museum and trolley) that really seemed worthwhile was the old jail tour. I needed to check out of the motel by noon, so I checked out. The guy on the trolley said there was a big parade due to hit the street at noon. I sort of wanted to check it out, but at the same time I was tired of Saint Augustine. I ended out of the motel and left town before the parade started. As I was biking north, I saw a few Motorcycle police with their serine on were headed towards Saint Augustine. The motorcycle police were followed by a few hundred people on Motorcycles. My guess is they were part of the noon parade. I continued north to Neptune Beach. Like Saint Augustine this was a monumental beach to me, on May 29, 1991 that was the place where I first stepped in the Atlantic Ocean to complete my bike ride from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. I spent a long time on Neptune beach taking photos and feeling proud on myself. I continued biking north and about 2 miles before arriving at the Mayport ferry I got another flat. I pumped up the tire and arrived at the ferry at Mayport. People on the ferry were asking me about my trip and told me the ferry was due to shut down because it was not properly funded. It was getting close to sunset and I was not sure what I would find with respect to lodging or camping where the ferry let me off. I pumped up the tire and cycled away to the first campground per my GPS. My GPS pointed me to a campground where some people were welding together a broken trailer. I asked about camping and they told me I should go over to this house to find out what was available. A man that was staying at the campground was very interested in my bike and the man that was welding told me there was a cheaper nicer state park campground a few miles down the road. A lady at that campground said the state park would be windy and thought I should stay at that campground so I would not be in the wind. This first campground may have been more interesting for the people, but I like state parks and decided to head to the other campground. I walked out of that first campground and pumped up my tire and cycled like crazy to the State Park. I had to fill up the tire one more time before arriving at the state park. I just wanted to make it to the campground and fix the slow leak there. When I arrived at the state park campground, Huguenot Memorial Park, it was closed with a person

manning the campground entrance. He gave me a campsite and told me I might need to show the camp host my permit and if I wanted my change (\$0.05) I would need to get it in the morning. I had to fill up my tire one more time after paying my camping fee and before arriving at the campground. The state park campground had a nice beach. The campsites in the middle of the campground were less expensive than the Ocean front sites. I figured why not go with Ocean front. He told me the inter bay was less windy so I went with that. The sight he gave me was not very scenic, I would have been just as good with the cheaper sites. There were some sites on the other side of the campground that were worth the extra money. He assigned me a sight, so I took it. I should have gone with the nice sites and just stayed there. No one else showed up that night and the other side had boats and ocean water near the sites. When I was near the rest room charging my cell phone and fixing my flat tire, a very nice-looking lady came over and told me her husband might come later. She was celebrating her 34th birthday by herself and also came over to charge her cell phone. I worked on my journal and then went back to camp to sleep for the night. (Bike miles 47.66 miles; Total bike miles 755.7; GPS miles 555.33 + 16)

### **Day 23, Sunday, January 15, 2012**

I lost another tent pole, I need to get more of them when I return. I cycled the rest of the way Fort Clinch State Park. Before getting to the park, I stopped at a store to get a snack, the guy running the store was very interested in my bike journey. He was local and told me how to get to the fort and how to get from there to Georgia. When I first arrived, I was biking with some local people. The one man commented on how he does long distance bike rides and that there is always someone on the tours he does with a Bike Friday. I told him I thought my Bike Friday was a great travel bike and that the suitcase was excellent for packing the bike for the flight home. The suitcase is the trailer I used to carry my gear while biking. The ride through the park had mountain bike trails and the trees that lined the road had lots of hanging Spanish moss. I had been seeing the hanging moss ever since I was north of Daytona beach. I checked out the fort and took a lot of photos. Then I checked out the historic town of Fernandina. It had some neat old buildings. I then biked towards Kingsland Georgia. The boarder was exciting since it meant I cycled the entire state of Florida, South to North. Once in Kingsland I found a nice inexpensive Budget motel to stay in. Then I biked to the more commercial side of town near the freeway to buy groceries and souvenirs. It was about a 10 miles round trip ride to that part of town and when I returned to the motel, I ate dinner and watched TV. (Bike miles 64.51 miles; Total mile miles 820.21; GPS miles 610.58 + 16)

### **Day 24, Monday, January 16, 2012**

I slept really well that night and did not wake up until after 8:00 AM. I got everything ready and was biking by 9:00 AM. I stopped at the Georgia boarder to take some

photos and found a full Beck's beer. I saved it and drank it that night in my hotel. I cycled to the Jacksonville Airport. I used my cell phone to check out rental car rates. It looked like Advantage had the best rates. At the airport I asked the baggage porters about rental cars and they told me down stairs in the airport. Then I asked specifically about Advantage rental cars and they gave me detailed directions of how to get there, it was about 2 miles from the airport. I ended up still using my phone GPS to find the Advantage car rentals, the porters did help by backing up the turns I needed per my GPS. I rented a car and then drove to downtown Jacksonville. I used my cell phone to find a deal on a motel. When I went to the motel that was advertised as having \$30/night rooms the man told me I had to get the room online for that price. I used my phone and ordered the room for that price. No problem I had the cheap room within a few minutes using my cell phone. I then biked around downtown Jacksonville, it seemed like a boring town. I found the brew pub, but it was closed since it was Martin Luther King Day. Then I went back to the motel, packed my gear and bike for my flight home. Then I watched TV and ate all my remaining food. (Bike miles 43.12 miles; Total bike miles 863.33)

### **Day 25, Tuesday, January 17, 2012**

I left the motel at 8:30 AM and went to take the sky tram to downtown Jacksonville. I could not figure out the parking I saw a man park and walk over to the sky tram, I figured that meant the parking was free. Then I paid to get on the sky tram and I saw the other guy before boarding and he told me he had a monthly parking pass and that I was supposed to park in the other area and pay to park. I left the tram area and paid for parking. I had to pay a second time to get on the sky tram since I left to pay for parking. I was a little worried about my stuff in the car all day, but it was all in the trunk and no one could see it. I walked all around the city of Jacksonville until about 11:15 AM. Then I took the sky tram back to my rental car and drove towards the airport. I filled the rental car with gas, returned the car and had the rental car shuttle take me to the airport. I thought I had tons of time and walked around the area outside security for a while. Then I decided to go through security, the line was very long and it took about 20 minutes to get through airport security. Then I only had 20 minutes until my flight boarded. I can normally find souvenirs at the airport, but I had no luck at this airport. I really did not get any good souvenir on this trip to bring back home. Normally on my trips I bring back souvenir to remind me of my trips. I bought some Corona salt and pepper shakers at the Dallas Airport. When I arrived in Portland Linda picked me up at the airport and gave me a ride home. (Bike miles 0 miles; Total bike miles 863.33)

### **Day 26, Wednesday, January 18, 2012**

I went to work in the morning. (Bike miles 0 miles; Total bike miles 863.33)