

# **Biking Paraguay/ Argentina/ Uruguay 2015**

## **Day -2, Friday, November 13, 2015**

Nancy and I went to the Fire on the Mountain restaurant on Burnside to meet up with Dave, Ellen, Caleigh and Natalie. After dinner Nancy and I went to a James Bond Movie at Lloyd Center. I was very tired and did not stay awake for most of the movie. After the Movie we went to my place and quickly fell asleep.

## **Day -1, Saturday, November 14**

In the morning Nancy and I walked to new Seasons to get breakfast and then back to my place. Dave and his family showed up at my place around 10:00 AM and I showed them my house. The girls noted that I had pictures of Natalie on display, but no pictures of Caleigh, oops! Then we all went to Powell's for a while. After that we had lunch at Noodles. Then Nancy and I went back to my place and I finished packing from my trip to South America. At around 3:00 PM Nancy dropped me off at the airport. My flight out of Portland left at 6:00 PM, so I had a lot of time at the airport. The flight to Phoenix was quite conformable I had 3 seats to myself. The flight to New York City was running a little late. When I got on the plane a young man (about 20 years old) was in my seat. I showed him my ticket and he claimed it was his seat, when I looked at his ticket, I saw he was a middle seat and told him he was in seat B (the middle seat, my guess is he knew). He complained, but did move. I took a sleeping pill and slept great on the flight to New York City.

## **Day 0, Sunday, November 15, 2015**

My flight landed in JFK international airport near New York City a little after 5:00 AM. I had researched how to take public transportation to Manhattan the previous day. Since I had a 12-hour layover, I took the AirTrain to Jamaica Station and the Long Island rail road (LIRR) to Penn Station in Manhattan. Once in Manhattan I first walked around the empire state building and then I walked to the world trade center to check out ground zero. Then I walked back to Penn Station and took Public Transportation back to JFK international airport. Since I practically went the same route to and from the airport the process was very easy. I exchanged some US money at the airport for Uruguay and Argentina money. They did not have Paraguay money at the airport money exchange. I boarded my flight to San Paulo around 5:00 PM. It was a 10-hour flight, I watched a couple of movies and slept for about 5 hours on that flight.

## **Day 1, Monday, November 16, 2015**

I thought I had to check my bags in Brazil, per Portland and an announcement I heard on the plane before we landed. Well, I followed the signs to connecting flight and ended up in terminal 3. Looking on the screen by flight to Asuncion was from gate 53.

I could not find it, then I asked it was back where I started when I arrived. It was a lot of walking going back and forth to the terminals. I still had trouble finding the gate when I got back to the correct terminal. I asked about baggage check and was told by 2 different security checks that I would pick up my bags in Asuncion. Since the people at the security checks did not speak great English, I was still a little concerned about my baggage. The luggage did show up in Asuncion. When I boarded the plane in Portland, I had shorts under my long pants that did not go well with Portland security. They had to do extra padding me down in Portland, due to the shorts under my long pants. I took off the long pants and had my shorts on when I left New York City. In Brazil I noticed no one had shorts on. So, I put my long pants back on so I would arrive like everyone else in Asuncion. Once in Paraguay I got in the long line and noticed a short line of people getting Visas before going to the long. I found out I was supposed to be in the Visa line, so I went and got in the short line for a Visa. There were only 4 people in the Visa line but the visa process takes about 10 minutes per person. It took about 30 minutes to get my Visa for Paraguay. Once I finally got my Visa the long line was short and almost everyone was gone. I saw them about to take my luggage away, I jesters it was mine luggage and was able to get it once out of customs. The guy that helps people with bags helped me, but I did not want help. I gave him 2 dollars, but I did not want or need help. Oh well, he did help me get a valid taxi. It was pouring rain and the roads were getting flooded. When the taxi driver dropped me off, I gave him \$20.00 USD. He complained because the billed was taped (that is the way I got if from the ATM in the USA). I gave him a different \$20.00 and he looked at it funny (there was a minor crease in the bill) too but he took it when I showed him my empty wallet. I always carry one wallet with almost no money when I travel and only show that to people. It often saves me. After checking into the hotel, I went to check out the mall across the street. The rain had let up a little, but the roads were still flooded, my feet got wet crossing the road. At the mall I tried using my liquid card to get cash, but it would not work so I used my regular ATM card. I withdrew 1 million Guarani. The hotel door was very difficult to open, seems like I should have complained. I could get it to open each time after several attempts (The card reader was not unlocking the door). I walked for a while got some groceries and then went back to the hotel and took a 30 minute knap. Then I walked a long distance to what my GPS called Asuncion, it was a market area and no neat building. After the earlier rain the sky cleared, so I did not bring rain gear on my walk and when I was about 3 miles away the clouds started moving in. I went back quickly and arrived at the hotel before it rained a little more. I then assembled my bike and trailer and work on this journal. (Bike start odometer 4115.1 total miles; GPS start 6681.75 miles)

## **Day 2, Tuesday, November 17, 2015**

I left the hotel in the rain with head winds. It took me a long time to finally get out of

the city. I tried to use my GPS navigator to get out of the city, but I kept going the wrong ways. At one point a bus got very close to me and tapped my trailer, after that I decided to put the flags on my trailer to make sure people could see the trailer. I ended up using the GPS in non-navigator mode to find the main highway. I had to use GPS navigator mode to get through San Lorenzo. After San Lorenzo it was easy to navigate. On one corner in San Lorenzo, I heard something drop to the ground, it was the container with my credit cards that had fallen out of my pockets. Shew, good thing I did not lose that. It was a warm day and I was not feeling energetic. I walked my bike often. One hill was very big. The temperature reached close to 100 F. Overall it was a pretty uneventful day. At one point a dog chased me (this happens often) and tried biting my foot (this is rare), I could feel the dog's teeth on my shoes, but the teeth did not penetrate my shoes. Not too many places to stay, I went to a hotel that was showing up on my GPS, I was glad when it was there. No other hotels per GPS for 25 miles. It was early to stop for the day, still about 3 hours before sunset. I walked around the small town, not much to it. At hotel I was looking everywhere for my CoolCam charging cable. Could not find it, must have lost it or left it in Portland. I did find it a couple of days later. (Bike miles 58.65, total 4173.7; GPS miles 59.9; total 6741.46; 1342 total elevation gain, max elevation 995 feet)

### **Day 3, Wednesday, November 18, 2015**

At about 5:30 AM I could hear a thunder storm and it rained hard until almost 8:00 AM. Then I left my hotel in a light rain, about 10:30 AM it stopped raining for the remainder of the day. I saw several neat birds and butterflies. A man on a motorcycle stopped to talk to me, he offered to tow me. He undid a light rope and I tried holding it as he went. I could not do it and it was making my bike unstable. He suggested tying the rope to my bike, but I figured that would be a disaster when he hit one of the speed pumps of the road shoulder. There are these annoying speed bumps every 200 feet on the shoulder. Some of them have grooves cut out so motorcycles can ride the shoulder. Most of the cut outs are not wide enough for my trailer tire. Sometimes there are no cutouts in the shoulder grooves. The previous day, I hit a couple of the speed bump and my front pack fell off. I think if I would have had him tie my bike to his motorcycle and we hit one of the bumps I would have gotten hurt. I told him I felt it was not safe, he invited me to his house for water and beer. I kept thinking I would see him along the highway near his house, but I never saw him. I was a little glade because I always feel I do not have time to chat. I normally need to keep moving. Once I arrived in the town (a couple hours before sunset) of Caaguazú I noticed a nice hotel, but continued to town to find a hotel near the bus station that I had been tracking with my GPS. After finding the bus station and I did not find the other hotel. I also saw a lot of hotels that did not look as good as the one I saw on the way into town. The hotel I had seen before entering town was cheaper than the hotel I had stayed in the previous night and a lot nicer, it had hot water, Wi-Fi (but I could not get

it to work) and a swimming pool. (Total GPS miles 6799.44; trip miles 118; max elevation 1169; hotel at 1154; total gain 2260 Bike odometer 117.15; total miles 4232.2)

#### **Day 4, Thursday, November 19, 2015**

I cycled to the bus stop and they immediately took me with my bike and suitcase trailer, no special packaging required. When I first got on the bus my GPS miles were 119 (6800.16) and I took the bus for about 90 miles to Ciudad Del Este (end of bus GPS miles 209, 6890.47). On the bus the police boarded the bus and woke me up. I showed them my passport, they looked at it for a minute, then the policeman shook his head yes and gave my passport back to me. Before the bus got to the last stop, I was following my GPS and got off before the last stop thinking I would avoid the city center. It's not a big city. I noticed my odometer was not working and a closer look at the cable I noticed it was broken, due to the wheel getting spun 360 around. Not a very good bike design. I cycled to where I thought the ferry terminal would be from the description in my Brandt travel book and a wavepoint I created on my GPS the previous night. The route was through some sketchy area and I was hoping I would not need to bike back to town. At one point some school kids started running after me, I think one of them was either trying to get into my trailer or onto it. I said something to him and went faster. He then quit chasing me. Very young child he was just playing and showing off to his friends. I was glade when I finally saw a sign to the ferry, it was the first sign and it was the spot that I thought it would be based on roads in the area and the picture in my travel book. I was glade to find the ferry and not have to go back into town. While on the ferry, I fixed my bike odometer cable. Once in Argentina arriving from the ferry I went through customs, it was probably the easiest boarder closing I have ever done in a Latin American country. I was having trouble figuring out where to stay in town, it took me over an hour to decide on a hotel. I picked one that I thought was close to Iguazu Falls, it turns out it was just a short distance from town and still another 10 miles to the falls. Probably would have been better off in town. They wanted me to leave my bike unlocked in the lobby, but I locked it to a light post in front of my hotel room. I wish they would just let me put my bike in my room. Less than half the Latin American hotels will allow the bike in the room. After checking into the hotel, I cycled to the Iguazu Falls, it was a lot farther than I thought it would be. As I was entering the park, I cycled over a big speed bump at about 15 MHP and my front pack flew off the bike. It was a big speed bump I should have slowed way down. Something is wrong with the pack connection or I have too much weight in the handlebar pack. This was the third time this trip the handle bar pack fell off its mount. Once in the park I took the train to the upper falls trail and hiked to the overlook of Garganta Del Diablo. Then I hiked back and returned as it started raining. Then it started thundering and pouring rain for about an hour. The train ride was wet then I tried running to the entrance when the rain let up a

little, I still got soaked, the rain was really hard and saturating the ground with huge puddles. I tried getting a taxi back to my hotel, none would take me. I also tried seeing if a tour group would give me a ride back to town, no room. I noticed a bus and they did take me back to town. I wish I would have taken my rain coat; it would have helped but not stopped all the water due to the amount of the downpour. The bus stopped near my hotel. I wished I would have gone to town to see how to catch the bus back to the falls in the morning. I also wanted to get water and money in town. The electricity went out 2 times in my hotel that night, both times when I was trying to send e-mails. (I did not track end of day odometer – estimated end as 123.13 (also odometer was broken for about 9 miles; Estimated End GPS total 6907.7 – Estimated GPS miles on bus 90.32 miles; Estimated end GPS gain as 5300; estimated gain from bus as 2500)

### **Day 5, Friday, November 20, 2015**

I did not sleep great on this night, throughout the night I kept getting bug bites. At about 4:00 AM, I took the bed sheets and blankets off and found a single bug. I killed the bug and no more bites for the rest of the night. In the morning I had my complimentary breakfast and then I got ready to go back to Iguazu falls national park. I asked the lady at hotel about a bus to the falls and she said directly across the highway. I crossed the highway and saw people waiting for a bus about 200 feet down the road so I went there and asked them if the bus they were waiting for went to Iguazu Falls and they confirmed it was the correct place to wait. The bus came after about 5 minutes and I was on my way back to Iguazu Falls National Park. The previous day when I cycled to the park, no one was in the booth at the entrance to the parking. Today there was someone there, but since I was on the bus we did not need to park. Once I got off the bus, I quickly bought my 1/2 price ticket (second day price) and got into the line. They were just opening the park at 8:00AM and the line was very long. Once in the park most people went to the train and I went directly to the upper falls trail. After passing a couple of slow people I was way ahead of everyone and able to take pictures without people. It was nice to beat the crowds. I then went on the lower falls trail and by then there were quite a few people on the trail. But it was still not overcrowded. I finished hiking all the trails in the park by 10:30 AM and then decided to take the Grand Adventure tour. I went to sign up for the next tour but it had just filled and was leaving at 11:15 AM. The next one they could get me on was at 3:45 PM. I should, have signed up before doing the hiking. I pleaded them to just add one more person to the 11:15 AM tour and they said if I waited there for about 30 minutes, I might be able to get on that tour. I noticed people come up to the booth with a ticket and when they left the lady at the ticket booth said I could go on the 11:15 AM tour. Yeah!!! The Grand adventure was a great tour, up to the falls and then they dunk you under the falls. You get very wet. During the tour they were taking videos on board. I wanted to get the video, but did not know I was supposed to tell the

people on the trail I wanted the video. I saw the people collecting something, but I thought it was a group tour. After the tour I asked about the video where I bought the tickets and they first said it was too late, I would have needed to give them my hotel on the trail. Then someone in a back room said something and they told me where to go to order the video. I went to the location they told me to go and asked about the video. At first, they did not seem to know how to determine my tour, then someone showed up and they had a video. They identified me in the video and I was able to order a copy of the video. They said they would get me a copy of the video and it would take 20 minutes to make it. After 20 minutes of walking around I returned and they said it would take another 5 minutes to get a copy of the video, so I waited. After getting the video I returned to the park through a less traveled parking lot. A couple of birds were dive bombing me, one of the birds was getting very close to driving its beak into my head. I ran to get away from the birds. I think there may have been a nest nearby and the birds were protecting the young birds or eggs. There were a lot of cool birds, butterflies, large lizards, coatis and a rat like animal. I wanted to get a shirt from Iguazu, but I could only find low quality, expensive T-shirts and I wanted a nice collared shirt. I did not end out getting any souvenir at Iguazu Falls National Park. When I went to get a bus ticket to go back to Puerto Iguazu from Iguazu Falls, they asked if I was taking a bike (they remembered me from the previous day) and I said no bike today. I then took the bus back to the hotel and was hoping to find the jungle bike trail I saw on my tourist map of the area. I could not find it, at the place that it looked like the jungle trail started per my map I asked the nearby business and they said it was in front of their location, but I did not see a trail. I stopped at the location where I picked up the map and they said the trail was just down the road. I could not find it, it was not where it was on the map I had. If it was there the trail was overgrown and not meant for my bike. The jungle trail might have been a difficult mountains bike trail. I stopped at the hotel I was staying at and wanted to buy a 6-liter water from the store, the store was always closed. I asked about getting water there and then ended up selling me a very small (500 cc) expensive bottle of water at the bar. I then biked towards the Brazil boarder I wanted to check out the bridge. But customs for leaving Argentina was about 1 mile before the bridge and I did not have a Brazil visa. I then biked to the town of Puerto Iguazu and found a grocery store. It was open when I arrived, by the time I locked my bike it was closed and they would not let me in. I then started biking back to the hotel hoping to find a gas station to buy bread and water. When I arrived at the top of the hill near the end of town, I found an open grocery store and was able to get supplies. I was then glade the other store was closed. That meant I did not have to bike as far carrying 5 liters of water. (Bike odometer 144.19; total 4259.3 miles GPS miles 245; total 6925.76 Elevation 697; high 1169; accumulated 7330)

### **Day 6, Saturday, November 21, 2015**

I had the breakfast that was included with my room, it delayed my start time by about 1.5 hours and gave me the runs. It must have been the juice. I did not leave the hotel until 7:47 AM. The previous night I found my CoolCam charger cable, I looked everywhere for it a few days earlier without any luck. I thought it was white, but it was black, that might be why I could not find it a few days earlier. Since I charged the CoolCam that night I used it for the first time of this trip. When I was a couple miles from the hotel, I noticed that my odometer was not working I could not find anything wrong with it, but did get it working. Maybe it just needed to be reseated. Nice ride I may have gotten some good videos of kids with the CoolCam. At one point there was a traffic monitoring police stop, I was afraid to turn on my CoolCam, I should have, I think it would have been a good video to show what to expect in Latin American countries. I had to tell them where I was going, I don't think they noticed the video camera, so they would not have known if it was on. When I arrived in the town of Eldorado, I noticed some nice cabins to stay in, but then went into town. In town I saw a not so nice hotel with a Wi-Fi sign out front, so I stayed there. I think I would have liked the cabins better. The hotel was right on the main road and I could hear the traffic under my window and they would not let me put my bike the room. Most hotels will not allow you to put your bike in your room. The town of Eldorado does not look safe; they wanted me to lock my bike up outside not attached to anything. Finally, they let me lock it up inside the hotel's restaurant. The reason that they let me bring the bike in was because I was asking a man that may have been running (or owned) the hotel where I could lock it and he went inside the hotel, then came back out and then they let me bring my bike inside the hotel's restaurant. Like most hotels no power receptacles to use for charging or plugging in my iPad. I had to unplug the TV to charge my iPad and use it as a clock. None of the hotels on this trip had clocks in the rooms, so I always used the clock in my iPad to keep track of the time throughout the night. (Bike odometer 203.63 (total 4318.7) GPS miles 306 (total 6986.39) (Current elevation 787 (accumulative gain 8758))

### **Day 7, Sunday, November 22, 2015**

I left the hotel around 7:00 AM, should have left earlier. It was a very hilly slow ride. I crossed a river and a medium sized wild grey cat darted across the road in front of me. It was probably about 2 times larger than a house cat. Very cool and my guess a rare site, it was so fast that I hardly saw it. It seemed like a long day, at one point a truck stopped I was hoping they would offer me a ride. The truck looked crowded 5 people inside and a tarp over the bed of the truck. They seemed very friendly and had a very nice VW TDI truck. I don't know if they were trying to offer me a ride since I only speak English. I should have used my minimal Spanish to ask them for a ride. I had to really push all day with the hills, I made it to a hotel in Jardin America just before sunset. I thought about staying at the oasis hotel, it looked more secure than the

Hotel America. But the hotel America looked better and was next to a place to get supplies so I stayed there. (Odometer miles 270.43; total 4385.5) (GPS elevation 681; accumulative gain 11210; miles 372; total 7052.01)

### **Day 8, Monday, November 23, 2015**

I was ready to leave my hotel at 6:45 AM, when I went to check out, they brought me breakfast. It was rolls, orange juice and coffee and was included with my room. I figured since they made it for me, I should eat it, so I stayed and ate the rolls. I had one glass of orange juice (there was a whole pitcher of orange juice) and a cup of coffee. They had a large pot of coffee and milk. It did not seem like anyone else was at the hotel, but there must have been more people since they had so much stuff ready for breakfast. The lady that ran the hotel seemed nice, but she seemed to always give me dirty looks. The other people at the hotel seemed to be nicer and gave me friendly looks. Outside the hotel when I was putting my trailer and gear on my bike there was a group of people hanging out. I think they were waiting to go to work someplace, one of the guys kept giving me with dirty looks. I don't think he liked me, another person in the group smiles and said something (probably hello is Spanish). So, I concentrated on him smiled and said hello in Spanish while ignoring the guy that was giving me dirty looks. By the time I started cycling it was 7:07 AM. My bike odometer was not working again at the beginning of the day, I tried to fix it without any luck. Then a little distance down the road it just started working and worked for the rest of the day. It kept working even after removing it and putting it back on after visiting the Jesuit ruins. The roads in this part of Argentina are not very good for cycling. They have no shoulder most of the time and lots of traffic. Some of the trucks and busses practically ran me off the road. Some gave me room and some honked before they came up on me. When I hear them honk, I would cycle into the grass or rocky dirt shoulder. I kept thinking to protect my live I should have taken a bus on this part of my journey. When I arrived in the town of San Ignacio, I noticed a sign that said Jesuit ruins in 1 km, so I went to check them out. I went right by the ruins without noticing them. Then I used my GPS to find the Jesuit ruins. The ruins were cool and then I went back to cycling. This was where I took my odometer off and it kept working after putting it back on the bike. At about 35 miles before Posada, I went over a nice new bridge with 4 lanes (2 each direction) of traffic, a shoulder and sidewalks. After that the road got much better, yea. But after about 3 miles the shoulder went away and it was again a road with no shoulder and fast-moving traffic. At about 30 miles before Posada a kid in a beat-up economy car offers me a ride and of course I took the ride. We had to take a tire off the trailer to get it in his trunk and I had to fold the bike to get it in his back seat. I tried to pay for the road toll, but he said no. He was very nice, we tried to talk but it was not working that good. He used google translate to ask some questions. That seemed to work well for communicating. After he dropped me off, I cycled away from the big city. I do not have very much Argentina money left and when I went to a



cabin I asked if they would take USA money and she said no. I showed her all my Argentina money and she wanted 250 Pesos and that was all the money I had. I thought she would not let me use US dollars. I tried to explain I needed some Argentina money for food. She wanted to know the equivalent US dollar amount of 250 Peso and I told her \$25 USD. She seemed very honest and did some sort of calculation and came up with \$20.00. I really was glade she was taking my USD and I have enough US dollars, so I gave her \$30.00. She was being honest and I really do think it was more like \$25.00 USD. Also, the cabins were very nice and since she was not closely monitoring me so I could put my bike in the room. I kept having to lock my bike up outside in the other hotels. (Bike odometer 315.66; total 4430.8) (GPS trip miles 442 (included the ride I took in the old car about 30 miles); total 7722.02 miles; elevation 556 feet; accumulative elevation 13511)

### **Day 9, Tuesday, November 24, 2015**

I decided to skip riding a long distance and just took the bus to Concordia, Argentina. I cycled back to the bus terminal that I saw the previous day and it turned out to be just a terminal hub for Crucero Del Norte. When I asked about a bus to Concordia, they said I would need to transfer to the main terminal and I would not depart until 22:30 and I did not want to wait that long. I decided to continue to the next town and avoid going to the city of Posadas. I noticed an ATM machine at the bus terminal and I was looking for money the previous day, for some reason I decided not to get money. About a half mile from the terminal, I thought I should have gotten money from that ATM. I was not sure what I would do if I needed to get a room again and then take a bus. I didn't have enough Argentina money to do all that. For some reason I did not turn back to the bus terminal, so I kept using my GPS looking for banks and I found one. When I got about 15 miles from the bank, I found out it was not the right direction. At that point in the town of San Jose (only a gas station and police check point) there was a gas station and a police check point. I decided not to go the gas station. I was still thinking I was going to a town with an ATM. It turned out at the nearby roundabout I found the ATM town was not in the right direction. I did not have much water and should have turned back to the gas station, but continued. I assumed I would find a place to get water before it was too late. At the corner the road went from a great road to a road without a shoulder and lots of truck traffic. Well, it was hot, dry and all the towns were so small that they had no water for sale. When I was down to a few swigs of water I came to a village with several restaurants. I tried to get water, but they kept telling me to go a little farther. After a short distance the village was gone and I still had no water. I thought I would need to hitch a ride to survive. Then I came to a roundabout and figured there was a town in 5 miles. I figured even dry I could make it another 5 miles. When I arrived at that town, Gobernador Ingeniero, I found an ATM. I had trouble getting money, at first, I had my pass words mixed up. Then someone waiting used the ATM. I tried the other

ATM and it did not work. When the other lady left, I tried the first ATM with the correct pass word and was able to get 700 pesos. While getting money my bike fell over and I again twisted tire around and broke my bike odometer cable. Good thing I was able to get the money, if not I would not have had enough money for the bus. But I might have been able to pay in US dollars. I did not ask about paying with US Dollars. At that time since everything worked out, I was glad that I turned down the other bus, I would not have wanted to wait in Posada. The terminal I was in was not busy and I could pack the bike in the suit case without too many people watching. I was also able to walk around without worrying as much as in a big city about my stuff being stolen. Also, the bus departed sooner, the drawback was it arrived in Concordia at 1 AM. I was not able to get the trailer frame off the suit case, the plastic screw was stripped. I ended up leaving it on the suitcase, not sure what I will do when I need to fly home. I think I have had this happen before, will probably just leave that part on the suit case for the flight home (I ended up breaking the plastic off the screw at the end of my trip to get the part off the suit case). When I arrived in Concordia, around 1:00 AM, I could see a hotel open with the clerk at the front desk near the bus terminal. I was thinking about walking to it. But I wanted to get a hotel near the ferry terminal for my next day's departure to Salto, Uruguay. I ended up taking a taxi and tried to tell him something near the ferry. He ended up taking me to a lousy hotel that was about the same distance as the nicer hotel I saw from the bus. The other hotel was probably one of the taxi driver's personal friends. I should have walked to the other hotel. (Bike odometer 369.66 miles; total 4484.8; GPS before bus elevation 494; accumulated gain 14434; trip 497; total 7177.05; after bus GPS elevation 109; accumulated gain 21453; trip 820 miles; total 7499.55)

### **Day 10, Wednesday, November 25, 2015**

I was locked in the hotel, I put the wheel on my suit case at the bottom of the stairs. There was a sign on the door, since I do not understand Spanish, I used my book to try to figure it out. I think it said knock on the door. So, I did and the guy for the previous night was at the door immediately. He must have been dressed and sleeping next to the door. He let me out and I assembled my bike in front of the hotel and tried fixing the broken odometer cable. Then I started biking and noticed the odometer was not working. I first tried to find the ferry to Salto, Uruguay. The previous day I had placed a wavepoint on my GPS at the point where I thought the ferry terminal might be. Following my assumptions, I ended up on a dirt road through neighborhoods. I was chased several times by dogs in these neighborhoods, not well traveled roads. The roads all seemed too dead-end before they reached the river. After going down a dead-end dirt road with several dogs chasing me I asked a lady where the ferry terminal was, she did not even want to try to understand what I was asking and hurried away from me. She was not a very friendly lady, maybe she was just in a hurry. Then I asked a friendly man and he tried very hard to explain how to get to Salto and even

wrote direction on my notepad. I was confused with his directions and he was going my way and showed me a couple of the turns as he walked and I cycled. Then I got a little ahead of him and asked another guy. That guy pointed in a direction. Then the guy that originally helped me came along and pointed in the other direction. The 2 guys discussed where I was going and then I figured out the first guy was sending me to the bridge over the dam and the second (I showed him the Spanish word for boat from my notepad) was pointing me toward the boat launch area. They both seemed to think I would not be able to take my bike on the boats. I had time so I decided to go for the road that crossed the dam. I stopped at a park with artistic objects mounted throughout near the airport and I took a look at the odometer cable. I found that I did not separate the two cables and the wires were shorted together. I then fixed the odometer again, but I lost a lot of miles for the day. For my journal I ended up using the GPS miles for the daily miles. Once at the Dam I quickly went through customs to let me go into Uruguay. But they would not let me ride my bike over the bridge that crossed the Dam. I was not sure what to do. I started to cycle towards the dam and they yelled at me and made me come back. I tried figuring out what to do they indicated no bus and no taxi. Then they indicated they wanted me to wait under a tree near the border. After a few cars were let through a man in a truck with an empty truck bed came up the border. The border patrols asked the man in the truck if he could give me a ride over the dam and he happily gave me a ride. We tried talking, he was very friendly and we figured out some things about each other. My Spanish is really bad and he knew no English. I think one thing he was telling me was that the biking was OK near Salto, but dangerous near Montevideo. He dropped me off on a calm intersection about a half mile north of the town of Salto, I think he lived down the other road near where he dropped me off (that was the direction he drove and he pointed me in the forward direction). I then cycled south past Salto to find the mineral hot springs. I was thinking the hot springs might be like the ones in Costa Rica, but these ones were not nearly that nice. I arrived at the hot spring town around 12:30 PM. My GPS showed no hotels, but there were lots of hotels. The GPS maps might not be that great for Uruguay. The first hotel I checked out was not that appealing and cost 31 US dollars per night. The second hotel had Air conditions (the first one only had a fan) and a bigger, nicer room. Neither of the hotels allowed my bike in the room and the second one was 6 US dollars more expensive than the first hotel. I went with the nicer room at the more expensive hotel. I kept wanted to exchange US money for local currency. In Argentina I could not exchange the money at a bank because I showed up after 1:00 PM that bank in Argentina was only open from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. When I arrived in Salto, Uruguay I assumed the bank hours would be the same as Argentina and arrived at the bank around 9:00 AM and found that bank was not open until 1:00 PM (the time the bank in Argentina closed) and closed at 4:00 PM. Luckily my ATM worked at both banks and I was able to withdrawal money instead of exchange money. I did not have enough cash, so I would have needed to withdrawal

money at some time anyways. I noticed the ATM in Salto had an option to withdrawal money in US dollars or Uruguay pesos. It seems like US dollars work most of the time better in Uruguay than in Argentina. When I used my USD at the hotel in Dayman the man looked up the exchange rate in the daily newspaper. For the first time of this trip, I forgot to leave my GPS on to record my track when the man gave me the ride over the dam. This was actually a good thing since I needed to use the GPS miles since my bike odometer cable was broken for several miles on this day. It was a short cycling day, I arrived at the hot spring town of Dayman by 12:30 PM. I went to the hot springs area. They looked like normal swimming pools with hot spring feed water. There were about 10 separate pools and a few hundred people in the gated area with the pools. There were picnic table and lots of places to hang out around the pools. I spent about 3 hours at the pool area and in the water. I eventually become bored of the pools and walked around town. On one corner I could hear a lot of birds, I noticed in the trees some very big nests. I stayed and watched for a while. They were Monk Parrots in the nests. I took photos and watched them for about an hour. (Odometer miles 382.73; total 4497.8 (lots missed) GPS elevation 89; accumulated gain 21812; miles 843; 7722.24)

### **Day 11, Thursday, November 26, 2015**

At around 5:45 AM I could hear it thunder and then it rained hard for a while. I fell back a sleep better than any other day. I did not wake up until 6:45 AM, I wanted to leave early, because I had a long day ahead of me. I was all unpacked from the night before to get reorganized after my bus trip and border closing. So, it took me a long time to repackage. Then I had my breakfast that was included with my hotel room and then I finished getting ready. I did not leave the hotel until about 7:45 AM. This might have been my latest departure of this trip. The riding was easy and I went a long distance before the weather started changing. Then it started raining, I found a bus stop and it rained harder, I waited out the rain. While in the bus stop a lady wanted my Facebook contact information to give to her friends that were cycling. I do not really want unknown friends, so I gave her my web site and acted like I was not families with Facebook. While at the bus stop a bus stopped and a bunch of people got out of the bus to hang out at the bus stop shelter during the rain. One lady spoke very good English (she was an English teacher in Uruguay), she said the other people on the bus wanted to know where I was from. She was the first person on this trip that I had met that spoke fluent English. I told her and then took photos before they all got back on the bus. I also met a man at the bus stop on a motorcycle, he had traveled all over South American on his motorcycle and he took off in the rain after putting his rain gear on at the covered bus stop. The bus stops seem to be like the ones in Malaysia when the rain lots of people take cover in the bus stops. Although Malaysia has a lot more bus stops. After the rain slowed to a trickle, I saw a lot more Monk Parrots than before the rain. There are a lot of colorful birds in Uruguay. The rain stopped and I

continued. It started raining again and I found cover at a gas station. I bought supplies at the gas station and like usual I tried my few words of the Spanish. The guy selling stuff at the gas station realized I did not speak Spanish and asked in English where I was from. He was the second person on this day and this trip that spoke good English. The GPS does not seem to have very many of the hotels for Uruguay, it does have some. It had no hotels where I stayed the previous night and only 2 in my current location. Lots more hotels are actually in both locations. The sun came out just before arriving in Paysandú. The biking was easy on this day, mostly flat. When I arrived in the town of Paysandú the first hotel was full and the lady could speak perfect English. She was the 3 person of this day and this trip that could speak English. The lady told me where another hotel was and gave me very good instructions. I went to the exact spot she told me and did not see the hotel. The next hotel I found was with my GPS and had rooms. It was less expensive than the first hotel and had me lock my bike in a yard with a steel gate across for the hotel. It was my most expensive hotel of the trip so far. The Wi-Fi was not showing up so I went for a walk and checked out the cathedral. It was very nice, I continued walking on my way back I saw a guy chasing someone that look like a homeless young man. The guy chasing the homeless man was kicking and punching him. The kid that was kicking and punching went back to his group of friends. The homeless looking guy kept yelling at the other guy. The homeless man was very short and smaller than the young kid that was punching him. There were a lot of homeless looking people near the cathedral in town. I am not sure if they were homeless or just looked like run down people. They did not have a lot of stuff in their possession, so they may not have been homeless. Then the homeless looking guy that was getting punched picked up some rocks while continuing to yell at the young kid that was punching him and I decided to get out of there. I then walked back to my hotel and asked about the Wi-Fi. The guy gave me the password and said it should work in my room. If not, he might need to reset the Wi-Fi. The Wi-Fi was not working in my room and it started working half way to the reception desk in the hall. Once I was in the lobby the guy went to reset the Wi-Fi and it took about 30 minutes. Not sure why it took so long, I think the guy was purposely taking his time. It was Thanksgiving Day so I got my international feast ready, rich chocolate from Portland (malted milk balls), fresh canned tuna from Paraguay, baked bread from bimbo bakery in Argentina and fresh bottled soda from Uruguay. I set up the feast and took a photo to place on Facebook to show off my international Thanksgiving feast. (Bike odometer 454.6 miles; total 4569.7 miles) (GPS elevation 71; accumulated gain 2266.2; trip 913 miles; total 7593.05 miles)

### **Day 12, Friday, November 27, 2015**

I had the breakfast that was included with my hotel room at 7:00 AM before leaving my hotel in Paysandú. I did not leave the hotel until about 7:30 AM. The weather forecast for this day was 100% chance of rain. In the morning I was looking to see

about places to stay in San Javier. There was a single room in a hotel in Puerto Viejo, I tried finding it on Orbitz and nothing came up. I didn't want to sign up for another travel website so I decided not to reserve that last room. I had 100% chance rain forecast one other time without any rain, well this day it was wet drizzle from the start. It rained slowly harder, but never that hard. I was soaking through. I kept wishing I would have reserved that room in Puerto Viejo, because it was too far to cycle to Mercedes. I got to the turn off to San Javier and noticed they had camping advertised. I did not want to camp, but also did not want to bike all the ways to Mercedes in the rain. So, I decided to see what would happen and cycled towards San Javier. Right before getting to San Javier the rain was practically stopped and I saw a sign to Puerto Viejo. I looked in my travel book and it said the camping was at Puerto Viejo, so I cycled there first and was able to get that last room in the hotel. The hotel only had 6 rooms at Puerto Viejo, it seemed like 3 of them were empty. There were lots of campsites, mostly unused campsites. The Puerto Viejo area had lots of neat birds, but not exotic or big birds. I had about 6 hours before sunset when I arrived at the hotel. I walked around the campground looking at birds then I decided to cycle to the town of San Javier. On the way to town, I saw an owl on a post, it sat there and stared at me while I took its photo. There was another owl in the field. They were small owes, about the size of a pineapple. Once I was the town of San Javier the roads seemed vacant. Plenty of homes and same businesses, but the only person I saw was a guy in his back yard. When I came close to the end of the road in town, I saw a lady on a bench in front of a business. Then a bus pulled up to where the lady was sitting, the business must have been a small bus terminal. About 15 people got off the bus and scattered between 2 roads. It was still a pretty empty town. It seemed funny since most other towns have a lot of people walking around. A water front park had a large doll figure and some old tractors on display. The dolls might represent Russian Matryoshka doll, I read the town had Russian immigrants. In the trees near the water front park there were a lot of Monk Parrots, but there were no parrots near my hotel in Puerto Viejo. I found another park in San Javier with 5 of what looked like life sized (or bigger) Russian Matryoshka dolls. They were lined up from tallest to shortest. They appeared to be like the Russian dolls you can get that fit inside each other from tallest to shortest. I ended up cycling in town for about an hour. I found my route through town for the next day. I probably would have made a slight mistake the next day without the preparation. It helped seeing the bus drop off people, because the bus went back on a route out of town. I went back to my hotel and saw the 2 owls on the post again, all day I got fair bird pictures. However, the owls were the best photos. I then took a shower and washed my cloths in the shower. They were still wet from the rain earlier. It had stopped raining since a few minutes before I first reached Puerto Viejo (about 2 hours without rain). After my shower I went to the hotel/campground store for supplies. Then back to my room and shortly after that it started raining again.

(GPS elevation 82; total gain 23081; trip 958 miles; total miles 7637.39 Bike odometer 499.57; total 4614.7)

### **Day 13, Saturday, November 28, 2015**

I was ready to leave the hotel at 7:00 AM, but no one was at the desk to turn in my key. I left the door of my room open and put the keys on the bed. I had the same problem with the key when I left the cabin in Argentina. The ride was dry on this day, it took a while for my gloves to dry from the previous day. The big issue with this day's ride was the head winds. The ride was also a little boring, just lots of farm lands and no towns. The road started out very bad and then it was very good again. Uruguay overall has the best roads of this trip. Once I turned onto route 2, the turn was about 120 degrees and this was enough to change the head winds to tail-side winds. The rest of the ride to Mercedes was easy (~10 miles). I cycled to the water front area of Mercedes and there was a lot of people exercises and hanging out. Then I rode to the city center to check out the cathedral. I found a nice hotel near the cathedral and got a room for the night. Then I walked around town and then back to the hotel. (Bike odometer 566.2; total 4681.3) (GPS elevation 65; elevation gain 24223; trip miles 1024; total 7703.07)

### **Day 14, Sunday, November 29, 2015**

I took off from Mercedes before breakfast. The breakfast was not until 8:00 AM and I wanted to go a long distance. I took off a little before 7:00 AM and about 5 miles after leaving town I took a close look at the rubber part of my trailer arm. The rubber was torn about 1/2 way through. I did not think I would make it another 5 miles. I carefully continued and to my surprise I made it to the town of Dolores. I stopped at the first gas station and asked about a bus terminal or local mechanic. They really did not understand me (They only spoke Spanish, me mostly only English), but I think they said no mechanics on Sunday (makes since) and no bus terminal in town. I then cycled into town and saw a bus. I asked about a bus to Carmelo, but the bus driver said sorry and something about a short distance. At that point it only looked like a couple of threads were holding the rubber together. I then followed the bus to a small building (I was surprised the rubber was still holding the trailer). At the building they had a small terminal and I was able to get a ticket to Colonia (past Carmelo) on the bus I was following. I felt very disappointed that the bike was not making it. I felt I should have stayed in Dolores and got the bike trailer fixed the next day. I don't even know if I could have gotten them to fix it right. I really wanted to bike the full 66 miles to Carmelo. Once in Colonia I found out about rental cars and they did not have rentals available until the next day. I did not setup the rental yet, I wanted to research the rental car prices on line first. Then I went looking for a hotel. I kept thinking the few threads holding my trailer would break. The first hotel I checked out would not take me. I continued another mile or so and found a nicer hotel and got a room. I was

very surprised my trailer did not break off. At the hotel I tried renting a car on-line and was confused about the correct pickup location. The online rentals also said there was a high demand for rental cars in my location and that I should quickly rent a car before they are all rented. I did not want to make a mistake and setup the rental for the wrong location, so I cycled back to the bus station and setup a rental for the next day at the bus terminal. I then cycled all around town and out to Plaza of Toros. (Bike odometer 613.55 miles; total miles 4728.7 GPS before bus elevation 131; gain 24407 trip 1050; total 7728.77 GPS after bus elevation 31; gain 27926; trip 1140; total 1140 miles GPS end of day elevation 117; gain 28353; trip 1162; total 7840.92)

### **Day 15, Monday, November 30, 2015**

I kept thinking I did not want to rent a car for 6 days and started thinking I could delay the rental and take a bus back to Dolores. Breakfast at the hotel started at 7:00 AM and I arrived there at about 7:00AM and was back in the room by 7:15 AM. Then I was on my bike by about 7:30 AM and cycled for 3 hours. I was supposed to check out of the hotel at 11:00 AM and I checked out at 10:20 AM. I had a rental car reserved for noon. I was at the bus terminal by 10:30 AM. Then I figured I could leave my broken trailer at the bus station, delay my rental car for 2 days (changed pickup date from November 30th to December 2nd at 4:00 PM) and take minimal requirement to Dolores. I did get all that figured out and was not going to get on the bus for 3 more hours so I biked all over the area of Colonia. By the time I got on the bus (2:30PM) I had seen everything interesting in the Colonia area at least one time. I really wanted to make it all the way from where I entered Uruguay to Colonia by bicycle. Well since my trailer broke and I took the bus from Dolores to Colonia yesterday in order to make it all the way I had to go back to Dolores by bus. I took the 2:30 PM bus to Dolores and was in Dolores by 4:55 PM. There was Wi-Fi on the bus and I researched hotels in Dolores. When I arrived in Dolores, I found 2 of the 3 hotels I found on-line while on the bus that were located in Dolores. But on the one they called the nicest, I already decided the nicest one was too expensive. I still wanted to check it out before making a decision. I found the area on the water and it was very nice. I decided to stay at the hotel Dolores, so I went there and was able to get a room. By then I had seen everything interesting in Dolores and after checking into the hotel I walked for 5 blocks in each direction of the main square with cathedral in town. Then I went back to hotel and ate a tuna sandwich dinner. (Bike odometer 645.56 miles; total 4760.7) (GPS elevation 76; total gain 29210; trip 1198; total 7876.66; I did not have the GPS turned on during bus ride, since I already recorded that part of the trip, I did turn the GPS on for a minute while researching hotels in Dolores)

### **Day 16, Tuesday, December 1, 2015**

I had my hotel included breakfast and left the hotel at about 8:00 AM. The ride was



easy since I was not pulling the trailer. The road was great until the last 10 miles. That is when the shoulder disappeared, but without the trailer it was not hard to stay on the edge of the road. The ride was through farm land, I saw a few Monk Parrots. I was taking my time, but still arrived in Carmelo by about 1:40 PM. Since I had plenty of time, I checked out all the hotels. I liked the one at the hotel casino, but it was too far from town and expensive. I finally choose a hotel at about 3:00 PM for the night. Then I checked in and stored my gear in the room. I also got on the Internet to find out more about the wineries in the area. The main winery was 10 miles north, I went by that winery earlier that day. I think it may have been the winery I cycled past with the giant wine bottle statue in front of the vineyard. I was not going to bike back up there, if it was only a couple miles I would have cycled to that winery and sample the wine. But it was about 10 miles each way. I then went biking around Carmelo, not an exciting place. I biked back and forth and to the beach a couple times. It finally got to be 6:30 PM and I then decided to call it a day and went back to the hotel. There was nothing exciting on this day. Most of the biking I did on this day was through farm land. I cycled past a lot of wheat farms and some vineyards that day. (Odometer 711.21; total 4826.3 miles) (GPS elevation 30; accumulated gain 30,064; trip 1262; total 7941.56)

### **Day 17, Wednesday, December 2, 2015**

I had my room included breakfast at about 6:45 AM, I thought it was not available until 7:00 AM. I would have eaten earlier and left earlier if I knew breakfast was earlier. The ride for Carmelo to Colonia was easy. Some parts of the road were great for cycling and some parts of the road were not so good (no shoulder or bad shoulder). Once in Colonia I went to where I saw a nice necklace the first day I was there. The guy still did not have his booth open. It was the second time I went back and his booth was closed both times. I had seen the earrings the first day when I checked out the art market in Colonia. After not finding that person at his booth for a second time I walked around the art market and found some other earrings I liked but no one was at that booth either. Most of the art market booths had people manning their items to sell, just not the ones I wanted to use for my purchases. I did not buy anything, since I could not find the people selling the items I wanted. I bought some groceries and then I went to pick up my rental car and stored luggage. I had no trouble getting the car an hour early. The funny thing is to get the insurance the rate goes down and when the guy did the math it only cost 1 extra US dollar to get the insurance. Normally I do not get the insurance, but I did this time since it was really only a dollar extra. I could not find my luggage ticket, so I showed the lady a photo of my bike trailer and she got me my luggage without the tag. Good thing I took photos of the trailer. When I first started to take off, I put the car into reverse and heard a big grind and the car stalled. Well, I forgot it was a standard and I did not engage the clutch before putting the shifter into reverse. After that I started up the car put the clutch in and drove off

properly. The rest of the trip I did fine with the standard transmission. It has been a while since I drove a standard transmission car. The car had roll up windows, no cruise control and no GPS. I think it was considered a mid-sized car. It seems like an economy car. I lost one of the big wheel screws for my trailer (I found it when I returned to Portland). I drove to Punta Del Este. I took route 11 so I would not have to go through Montevideo. It was a long drive, I had to use my GPS to find a route through San Jose. It would have taken me forever to find my way out of San Jose without my GPS. I never saw signs pointing me in the correct direction. The rest of the towns were easy to get through. I arrived in Punta Del Este after sunset and found a 3-star hotel near the point at the end of the city. It looked like a cool place so I paid for 2 nights. It was my most expensive hotel yet and only a 3-star hotel. The hotel was not great, no hot water. The light bulb needed to get replaced and the room had three single sized beds. The good things about the hotel was that it had a place with a locked fence to keep the rental car and it was close to the beaches and centrally located in the city of Punta del Este. (Car start KM 100433) (GPS start of car total gain 31,148, elevation 49; trip 1315; total trip 7994.38)(car km in Punta del Este trip 370.3; total 100765) (odometer 762.96 miles; 4878.1 miles)(GPS Punta del Este elevation 40; gain 31,359; trip 1325; total 8004.49)

### **Day 18, Thursday, December 3, 2015**

I ate my included breakfast at 8:00 AM and start cycling. I biked to the ends of the peninsula and then along the shore on the east side of Punta Del Este. As I was entering into La Barra, I had to cross a strange wavy bridge. My guess is it was some sort of artsy design that also kept traffic speed down. I continued cycling northeast for a while. Then I turned back and after crossing the curvy bridge I went across the peninsula to the west shore near Punta Del Este. From there I went north a little with a tail wind. I then turned back and had to go back to my hotel with about 6 miles of head winds. I ate lunch and then loaded my car and drove to Jose Ignacio. I thought this was going to be a resort town. It turned out being a sleepy village with mostly high-end homes and hotels. I cycle around and ended up near Laguna Garzon. I biked back to Jose Ignacio and checked out the light house. Then I biked back to my car and put the bike back into the trunk. Then I drove to the end of the road north of Jose Ignacio to Laguna Garzon, they were building a cool bridge on the Laguna which was a floating roundabout. Back at the hotel, I walked to check out the tide pools. Not much life, the Oregon coast has better tide pools. Then I walked to an area I saw to buy souvenirs, I got Nancy earrings and then walked back to the grocery store. (Odometer 805.63 miles; total 4920.7 miles) (GPS elevation 104; gain 33356; trip 1403; total 8082.1)

### **Day 19, Friday, December 4, 2015**

I had my included breakfast at my hotel in Punta Del Este and then loaded my car. I

was on my way to Montevideo by about 8:45 AM. It was an easy drive into the city. I would say for sure the easiest drive into a large city I have ever experienced in a Latin American country. Once on the city water front road I did not see any hotels just lots of sky scrapers. I was worried about finding a hotel with a place to park my car. Then I saw the Ibis hotel and was able to get an affordable room. I was at the hotel around 11:40 AM, but the room was not ready until noon. So, I took my bike out of the car trunk and put it together. Then I did a test ride and was able to get my room after that. I unloaded my car and was cycling by about 12:40 PM. I first cycled to the Palacio Legislativo building. Then I cycled all around that area for a few hours. I also bought a lot of souvenirs in this area. I got tired of this area, there were a lot of cars and the biking was not great. I then cycled the water front until about 7:00 PM. (GPS when arriving at hotel in Montevideo - gain 33569; trip 1419; total 8097.69) (car KM when arriving at hotel in Montevideo trip 607.5; total 101002) (Odometer 834.5 miles; total 4949.6) (GPS end of day - elevation 27; gain 34024; trip 1447; total 8125.95)

### **Day 20, Saturday, December 5, 2015**

I woke up around 5:30 AM and got ready to do some cycling. I left the hotel on my bike right before 6:00 AM. I wanted to cycle to where the trailed sidewalk ended on the east side of Montevideo. When I got near the point with the light house at Faro Punta Brava (southernmost point of Montevideo) I could hear some music. I decided to check it out, it was a water front concert. Seemed funny since it was only 6:15 AM and there was a concert. I noticed people leaving the concert at that time seemed either drunk or on drugs. My guess is the concert started the previous night and was still going on. Seemed like a bad place to be around with the drunken kids coming out of the concert. No one even looked at me, so no problem. I continued biking east. For about the first 10 miles the sidewalk was very good, then there was about a mile of bumpy sidewalk. Then the sidewalk got better and after about 3 miles the sidewalk ended and I had to go on the road's shoulder. At that point I continue until the next turn in place. Then I started back to my hotel. I arrived back at the hotel around 9:30 AM. I then disassembled my bike and put it into its suitcase. I put it into the suitcase within 15 minutes that was very fast (sometimes it takes an hour). I think it helped a lot that I put the trailer wheels into my duffel bag. It is very hard to get the bike and all the trailer parts into, the suitcase. I then took a shower and packed the remaining stuff into my duffel bag. I bought Band-Aids to try to put a better patch on my hurt foot. My bike shoes had been worn out with missing insulation. Probably since before I left Portland. I had a raw skin area near my heel created by the missing insulation in my right shoe. It had been hurting almost since the first day of my trip. Using Band-Aids to tape gaze on the injury seemed to help a lot. I checked out of the hotel by about 11:15 AM. I drove towards the airport and saw a big store, so I checked it out, it was like a Walmart with lots of stuff. I looked for souvenirs and there were not any souvenirs or anything I wanted. I also looked for an ace bandage for my foot injury,

no luck. Good thing I had the Band-Aids. Then I started driving towards the airport, looking at my GPS it did not have gas station near the airport. So, I found one with my GPS and filled up the tank. On the way back to the airport I noticed 2 gas stations. I guess the GPS maps are outdated. Once near the airport I saw thrifty and budget rental, but could not find the Avis. So, I ask someone at the thrifty office and they said Avis was returned at the airport parking lot. I went to the airport parking lot and still saw no Avis or by that matter any rental car returns area. Then I noticed a parking spot labeled with Avis. I parked in an Avis spot and as I was walking to the terminal, I noticed a line of return cars. I saw a guy with an Avis shirt and told him where I parked, he said that was fine and I gave him the rental car key. I checked in for my flight at the airport and walked around the airport. Things at the airport were very expensive; normally I like to spend my foreign money on souvenirs at the airport. But since the selection was not right for me and it was too expensive, I did not buy anything. They had a money exchange office before I entered the security side of the airport. But no money exchange office once you went through security (airport gates area). I wanted to exchange money, but did not want to go through security again. So, I kept my foreign currency. It was a long boring wait for my flight. My flight left Montevideo around 6:05 PM. The first flight was to San Paulo, Brazil (GRU) and arrived there at around 9:40 PM. Then the long flight left GRU around 11:05 PM headed to New York City. (Bike odometer 860.77; total 4975.9) (GPS gain 34244 feet; trip 1473; total 8151.82 miles) (When I first rented the car the start miles were 100395 KM; end of trip 101044 km; trip 649.5 KM)

### **Day 21, Sunday, December 6, 2015**

I slept for about 7 hours on the flight to New York City. I arrived at JFK from GRU around 5:30 AM, I had to recheck my bags and go through customs. Then I took the AirTrain from JFK to Jamaica Station. Then I took the LIRR to Penn Station Manhattan, I was in York city by about 8:00 AM. I did not have someone help me figure out how to get tickets back and forth from Penn Station. A man working there helped me get round trip ticket on my visit to New York City prior to going to Paraguay (about 3 weeks earlier). I had to pay more this time than when the guy helped me. I made mistakes on the AirTrain and my return trip to the airport I paid the peak price (was not sure, but when I got on train it said off peak time). Once I was at Penn Station, I had trouble figuring out how to find the subway. From my cell phone I was able to figure out which subway to take and which stop to get off. But in order to find the subway I needed to get help. It was actually quite easy I just needed to properly follow the signs. When I got off the subway at Rector Street, I was able to quickly and easily find the terminal to catch the boat to the Statue of Liberty. The boat was due to take off at 9:30 AM. They quickly got everyone on the boat and then the boat sat there until about 10:00 AM (for about 30 minutes), before departing to Liberty Island. Once on Liberty Island I walked around the Statue of Liberty and then

tried getting an additional ticket to go up into torch. Well, they told me I could not get tickets to go up; they said I needed to get the tickets to go up into the torch 2 weeks in advance. I was able to get onto the boat to Ellis Island from Liberty Island quickly and there was no delay in its departure. I walked around the museum at Ellis Island reading the display signs and checking out the displays for about 2 hours. I was able to get on the boat back to New York City from Ellis Island quickly without a delay after it was loaded. I was back in New York City by about 12:30 PM and walked around. I thought about getting a Citibike, but decided to walk. I should have gotten the Citibike and cycled over the Brooklyn Bridge. Instead, I walked half way across the Brooklyn Bridge and then turned back. There were hundreds of people walking across the Brooklyn Bridge and a small number of people on bikes. I was concerned about finding my way back to JFK airport. Well, I started out by getting on the wrong subway. A lady was looking at the sign and I told her where I thought we were, but she straightened me out and told me where I was. I got off on the station closest to Penn station, but had a lot of trouble, finding the station. Using my GPS, I found I was about 0.3 miles from Penn Station (I thought I was a lot closer). I was not paying good attention to my GPS because it said to go straight on this road, since I had been to Penn Station already 3 times, I figured I would recognize it. Well things started looking odd, so I checked my GPS and I had passed the station by 0.2 miles. I went back to where my GPS indicated Penn station was located and found the subway, but wanted to find LIRR. It took me a while to find LIRR, I had to ask for help a few times. Once on the train to Jamaica station I felt relieved. The whole process of finding the airport took over 2 hours. Good thing I had plenty of time. When I was arrived at the airport, I still had almost 4 hours to spare, I wished I would have walked all the way across the Brooklyn Bridge. At the airport I walked all around, got nuts for dinner. My flight for Portland left JFK at about 8:34 PM and arrives in Portland at about 11:58 PM. The plane arrived early, it arrived at about 11:35 PM and I was sending Nancy a text message and she sent one to me first. She was already at the airport waiting for me, she gave me a ride home and spent the night. I was glad she picked me up, I slept very good for 5 hours.

### **Monday, December 7, 2015**

I woke up around 6:30 AM and got ready for work. I cycled to work at around 7:30 AM. I started work at about 8:00 AM. A little bit of a tiring day.