

## Kelseyville 2011

We had ten bikes with the regulars Meredith Lawler, George Schjelderup, Gary & Beth Helm, Larry Jackson, Kory Rivera, Matthew Takeda, Charlie Myatt, and me. New to the group were Dennis Hamilton and William McGibbon.

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First off we had two crashes. Yes, two separate crashes. Now so you can start breathing...no serious injuries. In fact just one rider had a bruised thigh. A mean bruise yes, but nothing broken.

First crash was on Hwy 175, on Cobb Mtn. William McGibbon (a new rider to the group) got caught out of sorts on a sharp left uphill turn. He lost traction on the back tire and went down. He smacked a guard rail post with his thigh, causing the bruise. This was kind of good news as the post probably kept him from going down a sizable and steep tree-lined embankment. The bike was rideable, but did suffer some damage. Most obvious was the windshield...well and truly shattered. William made it home and is doing fine. He even stopped by the bike shop before going home to order the various replacement parts. I applaud the priorities: Get the bike fixed (or at least in progress), then heal. Big thanks go to Charlie Myatt who rode escort with William.

Second crash was on Mtn View Rd, out of Boonville. Matthew Takeda hit some gravel in a right hand turn, almost went down, stood the bike up to regain control, but ran out of road while braking. The good news was that there was a wide, flat spot -- rather than some other awful alternatives. Bad news the pine needles and dust in this flat spot gave very little braking ability. But he was going only 5-10 mph when he hit it and went down and the ground was somewhat padded -- with pine needles and other tree debris. He himself suffered no injury (praise the safety gear!). His bike suffered slight damage. The worst was the clutch lever was snapped. Good news -- HE HAD A SPARE LEVER! Amazing!

Big thanks go to the tail gunner crew: Kory, Larry, and George. They were busy and very helpful.

Now the rest of the ride. <still breathing?>

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When I arrived at the Texas Roadhouse parking lot I was dead tired. I had a bad night and not enough sleep. But I know me and riding a bike in the twisties will perk me up just fine. The cool morning sky had a lot of thin clouds. The run out on Waterman Rd, Mankas Corner Rd, and Wooden Valley Rd was mostly free of slow traffic and very enjoyable. Unfortunately when we turned onto Hwy 121 we hit some beyond slow traffic. Most either turned off or used the turnouts. The exception was a truck -- with a Harley sticker in the back window. I pulled the group into the parking lot at the Corners to allow that rude idiot to roll away and allow folks a quick rest and snacks.

Once on Hwy 128, after the rest, the traffic was absent or at least fast enough and/or considerately behaved. The air was very clear and made the scenery vividly glorious. As expected when we hit Silverado Trail the traffic could almost get to the speed limit. The sluggish traffic continued on the nice uphill twisties going up Hwy 29, where we ran into a convoy of horse trailers. They used the slow lane in the passing zones, but there was quite a few of those trailers and I saw only a handful of bikes follow me through. So with the passing lanes, we had little spurts of sparky riding until the next trailer blocked the road. Once up on the flat section of Hwy 29, I pulled the group over to make sure we had everyone. I seriously expected to wait longer than I did. I guess the passing zones were used with wisdom, but used. From there we rode at the speed limit all the way to Middletown.

In Middletown, we turned onto Hwy 175 with a few cars in front of us. Thankfully, two turned off and the third moved over to let us by. This section of road is mostly smooth and chock full of tight twisties. I was trying to be mellow (I was tired), but the zen of the twisties woke me up and made me misbehave (it wasn't my fault – honest). I was dragging my boots on left and right turns. I pulled the front group over just out of Cobb to make sure we had everyone. We waited... After a while I said some bad words and headed back to find William's accident. Kory's medical training came in handy as he evaluated both William and his bike. Charlie offered to ride home with William. Thank you Charlie. While getting William organized with parts strapped with bungie cords, a paramedic rolled up. We told them that our rider was alright, but they insisted on checking for themselves. While Kory gave his medical qualifications and 'patient' info to the medicos, a CHP cruiser rolled up. I felt it was too much ado for the minimum of the accident's results. The CHP officer said this turn has caused him trouble enough times. I rode back to the waiting lead group and gave them the info and waited for our tail gunners.

Gary and Beth went ahead so they could use the restrooms and have the restaurant prep for us. Once Kory and Larry rejoined us we continued on. That is one fun bit of road. Yes it is technically challenging (if ran at more than a mild pace), but fun. After the short bit of straight Hwy 29, we rolled into Kelseyville for gas and then lunch.

Lyndall's Sports Stop Grill was ready for us and we got orders placed quickly. Their menu is on newsprint and even has their 'Must Try's marked. I was tempted to have their fish tacos (had them before – very tasty), but I ordered the oven bake pastrami on a hoagie roll. The pastrami was tasty but tough, chewy. The potato salad was great. Everyone else enjoyed their food (not that I didn't). The service was friendly and given nine riders at once, was pleasantly fast enough. The prices were very mild. A good choice for lunch. We took groups photos afterwards.

We eight bikes (nine riders) rolled through town and back onto Hwy 29 for a short jaunt before getting back on the top half of Hwy 175. This section was way better paved just last year. Now the poor quality paving job is breaking up. This left gritty debris in places and even if clean, it looked less than perfect. Good news, there was little evidence of that darn red sand I had seen in my dry run. The bad road conditions made us ride with caution and slower speeds. Ah in memory I grieve for what it was.

We got stopped at one of California's great, never completed, semi-permanent one-lane road projects in Ukiah for 5-10 minutes before getting onto Hwy 101 for one exit (Why fix it? Just put up a light and walk away.). Hwy 101 took us to Hwy 253. Hwy 253 is a wondrous road of fun twisties – mostly well paved. It made up for the miserable quality of 175. Oh and the scenery viewed through that clear air with the light clouds as a backdrop didn't hurt either. We rolled mildly through Boonville and onto Mtn View Rd.

I had been describing this as a goat trail and the first portion was very well paved. I was hopeful...but soon enough the goat trail showed its true colors. I stopped the lead group at various times to make sure we had everyone. At one stop Meredith asked why so many stops. So with a small grumble I meekly pulled away. We rolled the last 10 miles non-stop. Oh we had a blast. I finally pulled the group over just before Hwy 1 and we waited... Again that horrible feeling grew. I told the group to go ahead and ride to Gualala for restrooms and gas. I headed back up the hill – much faster than I came down it – much, much faster. I found them eight miles up the road. They were just about to get rolling. I got the story, doubled checked Matthew, and we rolled on down. Having the right needed spare part is beyond amazing. And they quickly replaced it as well.

We got to Gualala and got gas. Unfortunately the gas station did not have working restrooms, so we had to go to the market. While we were at the market, Kory lost track of us. He saw Meredith's bike, but no Meredith. He figured we left him somehow. So he rolled on ahead to find us. After we had snacked and rested we re-

staged. No Kory. I figured he had to get to band practice and had left. Now we were down to seven bikes.

On Hwy 1, we ran into another of those perma-one-lane stops. We stopped behind a small pack of cars. Meredith hollered "Follow me" and rolled around the left of the pack to get ahead...just as the light turned green. The group got disjointed and we in front did not get around all of the slow, slow traffic. Oh well, it was a good idea. I found a wide spot and got the group gathered again. We rolled on down Hwy 1 and by ones and twos got around the sluggish cars.

In one group of tight turns, I spotted a bike ahead of us. Wait! I recognize that brown jacket and red bike. Kory! Shortly after getting back to eight strong the traffic on Hwy 1 clogged beyond our ability to get around. We crawled into and through Bodega Bay, Valley Ford, and Petaluma. We pulled into the gas station at Hwy 101 for our last gas stop. With the lack of sparky twisties, the long day, my initial tiredness had relanded. I felt beat.

We made it out Lakeville Rd at the speed limit (rare) and up Stage Gulch. Some of us did Stage Gulch Rd above the limit, but I'm not telling who (I did read the speed limit signs. They were real pretty.). From here the traffic again clogged the road at below speed limit...deathly so for me. We had a couple short blasts of open road before finally rolling into Solano county and home. It was 7:45 when I walked into my house. I was one beat and tired pup. I had a nice day and, even given the crashes, I think most everyone did.