Rockin’ the Okanogan  
A Bicycle Tour  
July 23 – 30, 2005  

by Robert A. Beezer
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Preface

This is an account of an eight day bicycle tour through the southern interior of British Columbia, the ninth edition of an annual charity ride organized by Tom Betterbed and Louise Pettie to support Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital.

Just prior to the 2003 ride, Alf Gunn asked me if I would serve as “historian” for the ride. I happily did so. And I’ve returned to do the same for the 2005 edition. I have tried to capture the memorable moments, the nature of the tour, and the joys of traveling and living with a group sharing a common goal. Necessarily, much of what is written here has been influenced by my own ride, but other riders have been generous in sharing anecdotes and impressions, so I have tried hard to make this an account that will be memorable for all involved. Photographs are by Jim Harrington, Mike McLean, Janice Holmes and Rob Beezer.

We rode around 541 miles and climbed around 27,224 vertical feet (well over 5 miles, or about 2,000 feet shy of the height of Mt. Everest). There were no serious injuries or sickness, nor were there any mechanical problems that caused more than a few hours delay. The weather was clear and dry, though probably more heat than most would prefer.

I hope you find this description of our ride accurate, interesting, entertaining, and evocative.

Robert A. Beezer
Gig Harbor, Washington
August, 2005
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The People

**Rob Beezer**  Second-time rider, maintainer of the Crankers email list. Group historian. 46 years old, mathematics professor at University of Puget Sound.

**Vicki, Tom, Tommy Betterbed**  Tom (50), Vicki (48), Tommy (18) form the Betterbed family together with sisters Elizabeth and Claire who stayed home with other commitments this year. Tom is a nine-time rider (the only one!), Tommy is doing the ride for the third time. Vicki is an integral part of the support team — on the road and in camp. Tom is group leader *uber alles*. Vicki is a mathematics teacher at Gig Harbor High School, while Tom works in the Clover Park School District as Supervisor of Special Education. Tom has ridden across America, "Coast-to-Coast" (Seattle to Asbury Park, New Jersey, 3436 miles).

**Mike Blondin**  Five-time rider, 50 years old, marketing coordinator for Metro Transit King County. Youth soccer coach.

**Theresa and Rick Creatura**  Both first-time riders. Rick (52) is a lawyer in Tacoma, while Theresa (48) is an assistant in the classrooms of the Peninsula School District.

**Suzie “Fergie” and Dave Crossland**  Both first-time riders. Fergie is so named for her similar appearance to Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York. She is doing the whole ride, while Dave is helping with support and doing a fair amount of riding each day. Fergie is a pharmacist, specializing in anti-coagulation therapy at Allenmore Hospital, while Dave is a judge who works on Labor and Industries claims.

**Phyllis Gamas**  Phyllis is new to the support team this year. Driver of the big rental truck and owner of the camp mascot, Mica, the dog. Works with Special Education students in the Clover Park School District.

**Alf Gunn**  Routemaster Emeritus. 63 years old, he is a retired FBI agent and eight-time rider.

**Pat and Jim Harrington**  Jim Harrington is the designer of this year's route and was responsible also for the selection of the campgrounds. Pat has ridden eight years and Jim has ridden seven. Pat is a psychiatric nurse who occasionally facilitates business training and team retreats, while Jim is a retired Northwest Airlines pilot.
Janice Holmes  First-time rider. Operating room nurse at St. Joseph Hospital, and therefore responsible for cuts and scrapes for all the riders. Moving to Australia shortly.

Mike and Joan McLean  Mike is driving support this year, Joan is riding. Sixth year for both. Mike is a retired pilot for United Airlines, Joan is a part-time (one day a month) dental hygienist. Joan just turned 62, Mike is 63.

Alice and Ron McGhie  Ron (48) is an engineer with an international construction firm. American-born, working and living in Taiwan, employed by an Australian firm. Alice is from Taiwan, but how they met is not as obvious as it might first appear. Ron is riding, while Alice is driving a rental car as part of the support team.

Krista Pearson  Second-time rider. Lawyer on an extended sabbatical. Responsible for all riders’ snacks. 48 years old.

Louise Pettie  Louise is the center of the support team. She prepares for many weeks in advance, keeps the food organized, arranges the campsites each day and directs the meals.

Fred Root  Fred is the group mechanic, in real life he evaluates repairs on Navy turbine engines. Fred is an eight-time rider. Rides to stay in shape for the ski season.

Steve Skibbs  Eight-time rider, 56 years old, owner-broker Windermere Real Estate. The one year he missed the ride, he was riding across America (southern route).

Chris Staehli  Third-time rider, tri-athlete. 57 years old, mechanical engineer for marine vessels. Has the oldest bike on the trip, with friction shifters and the widest tires in the group (28C).

Wally Tweden  Many-time rider. Retired United Airlines pilot.
The Ride

Gig Harbor to Omak
Friday, July 22

Riders mostly converged on Omak Friday night. Rick Creatura shepherded Theresa, Krista Pearson, and Janice Holmes, though he nearly ran out of gas. Approaching Chelan, the MDX reported 3 miles range remaining. They pulled into the first gas station outside of town, to Janice's excited utterances. As the ladies piled out of the car, the young painter in the beat-up station wagon getting gas asked, “Been shopping ladies?” Perhaps their flip-flops cum rag-ties gave them away. Then he spied Rick in Nordstrom khaki shorts and polo shirt. “Welcome to the country club!” he correctly surmised.

Overnighters stayed at Nicholas Motel with an evening meal and entertainment at the Bread Line Restaurant. To Steve's eyes, the equal of the Tides Tavern, without the harbor.

Omak to Oroville
Saturday, July 23: 42 miles, 1420 elevation gain

Rob and Alf arrived Saturday morning, and Wally arrived from Portland after an overnight stop in Tacoma. The huge rental truck, the assembled riders, and the assembled gear prompted one Omakian to ask if it was a yard sale. Guess we could have tried to sell somebody's bike.

A short meeting, and prayers for Dave Mumper, Lori Pollet, and Fergie's nephew, and we were off. Route plan was adjusted immediately to account for construction the first few miles, then we were back onto the side roads paralleling Highway 97. Rob called “car back” one time, when in fact it was just the sun reflecting off a barn roof, imitating a pair of headlights. Alf corrected him, “Barn back.”

Only about 26 miles to Tonasket for lunch, though the turn across the river was not marked with the same road name as the city street in town. Louise and Phyllis laid out a nice lunch of sandwiches, chips and sodas. Mike McLean set off after Alice, support chasing support.

Only casualty in the morning was Dave riding against the route and taking a small spill when he unclipped one side, but tipped the other way. Unfortunately for Dave, Louise was a witness.

Another 18 miles on Highway 7 took us up to Oroville, with Tom Betterbed, Chris Staehli, Ron McGhie and Wally Tweden taking a scenic detour away from the river.
ended up with sixty-some miles on the day.

The campground at the north end of Oroville is at Osoyoos State Park, with fairly
open campsites right close to the lake. Riders got settled, showered, while many took a
refreshing dip in the lake. In the absence of Tommy, Skibbs was able to erect his own tent.
Even Tom was able to get a tent up as well. Dinner was the traditional first-night turkey
dinner complete with all the trimmings. Everyone congratulated each other on a great start
to the ride, most likely due to the limited mileage.

Oroville to Kelowna

Sunday, July 24: 86 miles, 3569 elevation gain

It was windy overnight, and still blowing in the morning, but the temperature didn’t drop
far enough to create any dew. Breakfast was sausage and french toast plus the usual assort-
ment of cereals, yogurt, juices, coffee, etc.

Alf and Ron departed camp at 5:30 to attend worship service in Penticton at 10:00, and
made it, but their Sunday finest never arrived, so they wore their bike duds. Alice was to
deliver their Sunday clothes, but Rick had sent her on a wine-buying expedition instead.

A stiff headwind was the main feature of the morning portion of the route, plus the
absence of much traffic early on a Sunday morning. With Alf and Ron through the border
crossing, the rest of us got very little scrutiny with many of us not even producing doc-
uments (even the truck went through with no checks). It seemed there was a fruit stand
every kilometer, as we were coursing through the valley along the river. Every available plot
of arable land is planted with fruit trees, right up to the base of the cliffs on the extreme
flanks of the valley.

Out of Okanogan Falls, we followed the east side of Skaha Lake following the route of
the Canadian Iroman, and the tri-athletes were in evidence practicing for his year’s edition.
Around the north end of the lake, a couple of miles through the town of Penticton on Main
Street brought us to the lunch stop at the south end of Okanagon Lake, next to the art
gallery and Japanese garden. Wally and Chris missed the lunch stop, but otherwise were
on-route during the day.

Back to Highway 97 along the westside of the lake, which featured several big climbs up
away from the more rugged sections of the lakefront. Up to Summerland, up to Peachland,
and again up to the junction with Highway 97C, which heads back towards Kamloops and
Vancouver. The penultimate section of the route was a deviation from the busy highway on
Bouchiere Road. The sign saying “3.5 km to Mount Bouchiere Winery” should have been
our first clue — the final hill hit 18%. Rob and Wally had to avail themselves of a side
street to make it up the hill.

Steve and Fred agreed to visit the first winery they found after mile 65, and at about
mile 70, they took a left and went up, up and up to visit one. Rick shepherded in a group
of ladies, dubbed the “Two-block shoppers.”

A dicey ride on the sidewalk of the Kelowna floating bridge brought us within a couple
of miles of Willow Creek Campground. The private campground has a huge grassy open
area in back (we have about one-third of it) and free showers. Out the back gate, across
the street, and there’s a public beach on the lake. Very refreshing.
Photo 1  Babes in Fruitland, Okanogan Valley

Photo 2  Babes’ Latte Stop, Nakusp
Ride notes: Fergie completed her personal best, one-day mileage exceeding the previous mark of 56 miles. Fred had a flat, Steve had a bubble in his tire replaced before it exploded. Theresa and Joan both suffered low-speed tip-overs, which Janice fixed-up in camp. Jim bought huge ice-cream cones for some of the ladies, described as the best they’d ever had.

**Kelowna to Cherryville**

**Monday, July 25: 72 miles, 4084 elevation gain**

Most noticed on waking that there was no wind. We departed Kelowna in two groups. Wally, Chris, and Mike went long, back across the Kelowna floating bridge to continue up the remote western edge of Okanagan Lake, earning them an extra 23 miles on the day. The remainder went north along the lake on the bike trail, under Highway 97, then cut through downtown to a major arterial leading out of town. 10 miles later, just south of Wood Lake we regained Highway 97. We followed Wood Lake, which seemed to then meld into Kalmalka Lake.

The road along the lake was constricted by a cliff on one side and barriers along most of the other side. Which was fine, until the two halves of a manufactured home rolled through, sending oncoming traffic (and cyclists) diving for the ditches. At the northern end, the road went up and down and we chatted briefly with another bike tourist traveling from Alaska back home to Quebec. Steve passed him on the hill going up, and was promptly passed again himself — despite the tourist’s fully-loaded bike.

A great descent brought us into Vernon and Polson Park at the corner of Highway 97 and Highway 6. Polson Park was a gift of a rancher named O’Keefe who once owned the park and the land the hospital sits on. The park is famous for its “Flower Clock” where they lay out the date in flowers daily. The long group met up with us here, having done an extra twenty miles and allegedly a lot more ups and downs. Alice (their assigned support person) reported the route to be very scenic with great pine tree scents.

Here we left Highway 97 behind and picked up Highway 6. The 15 miles out to Lumby were fairly flat, through a valley dominated by hayfields rather than orchards. Lumby managed a respite for most of the riders. Beyond was one of those locations where the topography begins a major change — more evergreens, steeper valleys and fewer fields. After a few miles and a few uphill sections we suddenly enjoyed a nice long downhill to a river. Soon we gained Cherryville, a town splattered along several kilometers of the highway. Route sheet said just a mile to the campground. Mike had driven on ahead and informed us on the radios it was a good six miles further and a significant amount of climbing, which only earned him our contempt.

Pat Harrington was the first into the Goldpanner Campground, “My eighth tour and its my first stage win.” The campground is another private affair with a great open-air dining patio for our use, a gold mine exhibit, trails and swimming in the creek. Both Betterbeds and Rick went for a dip in the frigid stream before dinner.

Dinner was stroganoff, green beans with bacon and salad, with strawberry shortcake for dessert. In the middle of dinner, Dave stood up to award Pat the yellow jersey for the day. Pat had been warned and Dave stood poised behind her to put the jersey over head.
Pat said, “Open that zipper and make it fast!” Off came her jersey and (very quickly) on went a yellow one.

Ride notes: Wally had a flat. Steve had a valve problem with his new tube, so received another replacement tube.

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**Cherryville to Needles**

**Tuesday, July 26: 48 miles, 2851 elevation gain**

Being at elevation, it was a bit cooler overnight. Apparently summer has only come to this area recently, with a report of snow only a week earlier. We slept in an extra half-hour, anticipating an easy day. 300 yards down into Heckman Creek gulch, then up, up, up. Actually, the climbing was much different than in the Cascades. Rather than being steadily up at a reasonable grade, there were steeper sections, punctuated by short sections of flat or shallow inclines. After about eight miles we reached a very steep section with a passing lane and a grade of 14%, with spikes to 17% and 21%. There was a fair amount of weaving across all three lanes to push our way up. We were rewarded at the top of Monashee Pass with beautiful alpine scenery — dense forests and tarns on either side of the road. Rather than a severe pass, there were several miles of reasonably flat road, including the Spruce Grove Cafe (with bunkhouse and camping in back). This delayed the coffee klatsch by their first 20 minutes. Peach pie *ala mode* and coffee were consumed, while the young couple that owned the establishment expressed serious interest in supporting the charitable cause of the ride.

There were very few signs of civilization all day as the road coursed generally downhill. The Betterbeds were delayed briefly while sixty head of cattle crossed the road. Some steeper sections were very curved and made for great descending down the centerline, or even across the centerline. Good pavement, good grades, light traffic, fabulous scenery and warm temperatures made for a great day’s ride.

Within a few miles of our destination, the Backfire Cafe (a small trailer with a walk-up window) marked the beginning of a final 500 foot climb. Several stopped for root beer floats, while Pat shunned the toilet since it required walking twenty feet uphill. “I’ll pee in your front yard instead,” she exclaimed under her breath. And she did.

A 12% descent brought us up hard to the ferry dock on Arrow Lake (part of the Columbia River) and a left turn onto a gravel road just along the river.

A mile along the recently-wetted road brought us to Plum Hollow Campground. We have the whole place to ourselves, barring one other couple. Across the road is the river. Lunch was leftovers (ravioli, stroganoff, mashed potatoes). With today being a scheduled short-day, folks attended to errands in camp. Laundry and bike repair topped the list. Fred gave Steve’s bike a thorough cleaning, in addition to about eight other bikes. Pat and Fergie did their own bike maintenance, providing entertainment for the other wrenches. Rick, Mike, Tom and Tommy and others all waded in the Columbia. The afternoon discussion tended to the intellectual, with a concise history of China-Taiwan politics expounded by Ron.

Dinner was hamburgers. Afterwards, the campground hosts warned us about bears in the area, with the advice that we lock up all our food in the truck overnight. Specifically, we
Photo 3  Flower Clock, Vernon

Photo 4  Rush Hour, Monashee Pass
Photo 5  The Snack Lady, Needles

Photo 6  Fergie and Pat DIY, Needles

Photo 7  Camp Circle, Needles
Needles to New Denver

Wednesday, July 27: 68 miles, 3,234 elevation gain

Highway 6 ended at Arrow Lake, a reservoir behind a dam on the Columbia. So we rode back down the dirt road (or were shuttled back to the ferry dock) to catch the 7:45 AM or 8:15 AM ferry. The ferry ran across the lake on three cables, one on either side and one down the middle. The 7:45 AM run had one car and eight bikes. Krista found herself at the dock without her bike, so the coffee klatsch all waited for her, except for Fergie, who found herself on the ferry with the front group.

Highway 6 continued north on the eastern side, and only to the north, so traffic was controlled by the twice-hourly ferry. The pavement was good (occasionally perfect), the inclines gradual, the views spectacular and the traffic almost non-existent. And the shade of the high hills to the east made the temperature perfect as well. A cyclist’s heaven. Halfway up the lake at Burton the pavement deteriorated into coarse chip-seal with a relatively clear asphalt shoulder. The final four miles was mostly downhill into town.

After lunch we turned south on Highway 6, with Rick discovering a nice gradual route out of town. Up, up, up to Summit Lake for the first 10 miles. Just past the huge provincial campground, a rest area with boat launch invited Rick and Rob for an au naturel swim. Rob paid the price for his immorality with a nasty slice on the inside of his foot. Mike turned up a few minutes later and applied some first-aid to the sore. A couple of ladies repeated the swim a while later.

Eventually the road turned downward for a nice nine mile run and then we meandered up and down to arrive at our campground in the public park in New Denver, right on the lake.

Most folks had a refreshing swim in the lake, where Tommy discovered a ring. Dinner was spaghetti and scotch. Two cycle-tourists from the Fartman racing club were sharing the park, so some of us stopped to chat with them about their trip. They purposely rode very low-tech bikes, which makes sense when you need to make repairs or need to seek out a bike shop for assistance. They were mostly heading west, doing a greater number of miles each day.

There was some serious discussion about the timing of lunch and keeping the group somewhat together on the road, which was handled expertly by Tom and Louise.

Ride notes: Vicki smashed her toe, angling for better pictures of the ferry. Joan broke a spoke, and received several offers of loaner bike for tomorrow. Jim had a flat.
New Denver to Castlegar
Thursday, July 28: 62 miles, 3,192 elevation gain

The two low-tech bike tourists joined us for breakfast and then we all set out. Except for Joan who headed in to Nelson with Mike in search of a spoke. The climb out of town was much more significant than advertised. But in the cool of the morning the gradual and constant grade was a pleasurable start to the day. The road was owned by the Chambers double trailers (white with red lettering) slowly hauling cedar chips up the hill, along with the occasional log truck. Later the tourists came out to play.

At about mile 8 Steve broke a spoke on his high-tech wheel when his rear derailer put the chain up and over onto the rear axle. This put his wheel so out far out of true that he couldn't ride. Eventually Mike included him on the repair run into Nelson. $6 a spoke and Joan and Steve rejoined the route later in the day at the Highway 3A junction. While transmitting word back via a chain of radios on Steve's condition, Tom was dead in the water with his chain wedged down into the spindle of the bottom bracket. Eventually Chris removed a chainring to free it.

We paralleled the lake but had risen far above it, offering vistas of the still waters, the western shoreline, the steep hillsides rising up and the rough peaks above them. The descents back to lake level were spectacular.

The town of Slocan marked the southern end of Slocan Lake and the valley widened and civilization returned — traffic, bakeries, mini-marts and ice cream stands. The coffee klatsch found a fabulous bakery just down off the road.

Lunch was in the vicinity of Passmore, where Louise and Phyllis found a nice clearing just off the river beside a bridge. The remaining twenty miles were rolling hills with nothing too remarkable. But it was hot! Chris and Mike did a detour through Nelson, gaining 94 miles for the day. We left Highway 6 behind and followed Highway 3A down to where the Slocan joined the dam-addled Kootenay River, where the Brilliant Dam was being expanded.

Our campsite is where the Columbia is joined by the Kootenay, so we are back on the waterway of two nights ago. We have a nice site, complete with kitchen, free showers and a pond. Two Austrian cycle-tourists joined us for dinner, and Tom was recruiting them for next year's edition.

Later than scheduled, the Castlegar Chamber of Commerce came out to welcome us and gave us pins and brochures.

Ride notes: Joan's birthday, and she got a nice jersey from Mike. She also got an unwelcome present from a wasp. Theresa had a flat. Tom missed the sign for lunch since it had been blown down, and had to settle for a PowerBar. Pat followed Wally and blew the penultimate turn, the same mistake Tom made. Pat claimed the waterfall she saw was well worth the extra 4 kilometers. Wrong-way Dave made 50 miles, a high mark for the trip. Rick rode with the ladies, three nuts dangling from his pump.
Castlegar to Curlew Lake

Photo 8  Columbia River Ferry, Needles

Photo 9  The Open Road, Burton
Photo 10  Tired in Needles

Photo 11  Tired in Oroville

Photo 12  Camp, Castlegar
Photo 13  Breakfast, Cherryville

Photo 14  Dinner, Curlew Lake
Castlegar to Curlew Lake

Friday, July 29: 91 miles, 5,712 elevation gain

A long, tough, hard day for everybody. We awoke an hour early in anticipation, and the Austrians joined us for an early breakfast featuring delicious frittata. By 6:45 AM the campsite looked like a ghost town, save for Phyllis’ tent.

Over the Columbia and three miles through downtown Castlegar brought us back to Highway 3 via an on-ramp, and up, up and away we went. The first three miles were the steepest, but it was uphill until mile 30 on the day as we crossed Bonanza Pass and Paulson Summit. The morning was a competition between the rising sun and diminishing shade, and the cooler air at the higher elevations. The topography was the same as Monashee Pass, which must not be too much further north, but we were traveling it in the opposite direction. The eastern side was a long gradual climb through a pine forest. The descent on the west side was much steeper and greener. Rob met up with a double trailer of lumber, purposely crawling downhill at 30 MPH. So he passed it on the inside, leaving the cars stopped up behind it.

Twenty easy miles past the summit we came to Christina Lake and lunch (cold meat loaf sandwiches and warmed-up spaghetti). Rick got in his first swim of the day, with a brief dip in the lake. Out of Christina Lake the terrain was rolling, and the lack of foliage made it hot on the road. Just past Grand Forks, we caught Highway 41 south, avoiding a looming climb on Highway 3. Very quickly we reached the US border and the small jointly-run outpost. Jim had warned them, and they almost seemed excited to finally see the promised cycling tour begin to dribble across the border. Chris warned them to not “hassle the cook.”

The road became Highway 21 now that we were in Washington State and the route was scenic and shaded as we followed a scenic river upstream for 10 miles to Curlew, where Rob, Tom and Tommy managed to get smoothies from the espresso/bakery shop before it closed at 2 PM. The remaining twenty miles into Curlew State Park were a drag in the heat, but at least the grades matched that of the adjacent railroad line.

Near Malo, Ron stopped to avail himself of the support car driven by his wife, Alice. He left with the keys. By the time Alice realized that she had not really misplaced them, Ron was gone. She flagged down a citizen in a car, who chased down Ron, earning him an extra eight miles or so with the return maneuver. Ron finished with 98.5 miles on the day and we kidded him to get out and make an even century ride. In any event, he got the top daily mileage for the trip.

Rick shepherded the two-block babes most of the day, until he came across an 80-year old man trying to refill his broken radiator a few miles out of camp. The man had made one trip to the river for a bucket of water, but in the heat it was clear the chore had been taxing. At first he pridefully waved-off Rick’s offer of help, but his wife was a realist and made him accept. Down the embankment in his bike shoes and Rick collected another bucket of water, while simultaneously discovering a secret swimming hole — a rope swing, diving board and pile of empty beer cans. Back to the car and he used his bike multi-tool to reattach the radiator hose clamp and finished filling the radiator, just as a sheriff pulled up. With the ladies down the road a piece, and the sheriff on the scene, Rick took the
opportunity as an omen and returned to the swimming hole for a swim and a ride on the rope swing.

Our campsite is in a cul-de-sac at one end of the verdant state campground beside Curlew Lake, expertly secured early in the day by Jim and Dave. Most took a dip in the lake, which Jim reported to be at the perfect temperature. For Rick it was a hat-trick and his eleventh body of water on the week. Dinner was chicken and rice, followed by the nightly meeting. With mock seriousness, Rick rechristened the “two-block babes” as the “two-summit ladies,” based on their achievements for the day.

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**Curlew Lake to Omak**

**Saturday, July 30: 72 miles, 3,162 elevation gain**

Knowing it was the last day, everybody was just that little bit quicker getting packed up and out of camp, though a group photo in front of the truck delayed some. Krista had been struggling to erect her tent all week, and so decided to donate it to the campground. It remained behind at the site, still set-up, so as to dry out in the morning sun. Expecting hot weather, we again left camp before 7 AM.

The first ten miles were a pleasant roll into the too-cute town of Republic, where we were sure the two-block babes would be delayed by at least thirty minutes. Then our final climb began, up to Wauconda Pass. The gain was less than 2,000 feet, over 11 miles, and there were the now-typical respites. The last two miles were consistently upward, but the reward was some picture-postcard ranches in the high country along the pass.

From here, we knew it was a good 3,500 feet of elevation loss down to Tonasket, over thirty miles. And the road made good on the promise with some great curving descents. Partway down the descent, Alice stopped to provide water and cookies to a group of riders out in front. After some rearrangements of the back of her car, she failed to return one of the large orange Gatorade water coolers into the car, leaving it beside the road. As others of us descended, we thought it odd to see a cooler identical to one of ours just sitting by the roadside. Only Tom was clever enough to stop and investigate, and sure enough it had “Pettie” written on it. He hoisted it onto his shoulder and continued the descent for several miles with the wayward cooler. Lunch in Tonasket was a replay of the previous Saturday, same place, same time.

The route took us out of Tonasket on the main highway, US 97, for the 22 mile run south to Omak. The road had been resurfaced with blacktop, the sun was overhead due south, the temperature was in the mid-nineties, there was no road-side shade, and there was a headwind. The only sanctuary was the grocery store in Riverside, just five miles shy of Omak. Somehow, we all survived the slog home.

Back at Hotel Nicolas, we commandeered two rooms for showers, unpacked our gear from the truck and congratulated one-another on a great ride.
Photo 15  Ron at Wauconda Pass  

Photo 16  Slocan Lake Vista  

Photo 17  Evening Bridge Game, Castlegar
Photo 18  Group Picture on Departure, Omak

Photo 19  Group Picture on Final Day, Curlew Lake