

JULY 2020

NORCAL NEWS



Ride to Camp

Camp to Ride



BMW Motorcycle Club of Northern California

Presidents Column

Another month of the shutdown and I am running out of things to write about with the ongoing shutdown. We unfortunately had to make the hard call to cancel the ROL this year. There was no way fairgrounds were going to be open for a large crowd in September. At this pace, I am not really sure when we will be able to hold a group event or campout. If anyone has ideas for small group events we could organize while following the state and local rules, I am all ears. Please reach out with your ideas and thoughts. We will likely be operating in this reduced capacity for the foreseeable future unfortunately.

I'd like to thank everyone for their prompt dues payment this year. We were able to auto renew about 175 of our members this year and we ended the month with about 200 members paying their dues. We have about 70 or so to go. Be on the lookout for reminder messages if you haven't paid yet.

For those that donated to our Grappler fundraiser, we finally got the posters boxed up and ready to send. They should get in the mail soon. The posters look great and I am sure you will be pleased. The Grapplers were super appreciative of our donation as the cancellation of the 49er really put a dent in their fund raising this year so this really helps a great organization.

I didn't get much feedback on potential nominations for the election meeting or our plan to maintain the current board until we can hold a proper election meeting. So for the time being we will continue with that plan and all current Board members will remain in place until we can hold that much anticipating next meeting. With the shutdown there really isn't much for the Board to do anyway.

I have been spending a lot of time riding in the Mendocino Forest lately. It's my new favorite GS riding area. There are so many great forest roads to explore. It's just a short ride from the bay area and it offers the opportunity to see lots of wildlife. Plus, it has great dispersed camping options. Most of the roads are beginner friendly as well. If you are interested in going for a ride email me at president@bmwnorcal.org and we will get something organized.

Stay safe!

Kevin Coleman

Captain's Log

For a social club with a focus on group riding and camping, Covid-19 is not so great. Here we are kicking off another month and we're still in a holding pattern. Sure, some folks are getting out for some weekend campouts and some folks are able to head out on some long rides, but as a club we are essentially hosed from holding any group events. And, if this wasn't tough enough, we have now made the call to cancel this year's Range of Light Gypsy Tour. This is a tough call but there is no way we could hold the ROL in these times. But, we are of course looking forward to a great event next year.

The Board is also trying to figure out ways to get folks together in a socially distant and safe manner. Maybe a modified and small turnout SSBR type thing? We can't really organize a group outing, or even a meal at our favorite breakfast spot. So we are looking for options, but it's getting tougher with the current surging of the virus. In the meantime, we can stay socially distant, wear our face coverings when in public, and slow the spread of this in our towns and neighborhoods. And getting out for solo rides is still as awesome as ever.

Stay safe. We'll get through this and before you know it we'll be back to our regular format.

Nick Gloyd

Editors Corner

This is a very unusual newsletter. Fred Montano sent me a write up of his solo ride from Buenos Aires, Argentina to his home in Oakland. As the newsletter editor this created a unique problem for me. It was really long. I read it a couple of times hoping to edit it a bit so that it would fit or even split it into two parts, but this is such a good story that there was nothing that should be cut out and there was not an obvious place where it could be split into two parts. I finally decided that there was nothing else to do but publish it complete and not to spoil it. So for the first time since I have been newsletter editor this issue has grown to 20 printed pages.

For those readers that don't know Fred, he is 75 years young, and although he has ridden BMWs for the last 20 years, his trip to South America was on an Africa Twin with automatic clutch because of a rheumatic left hand. His main worry was that he would have the greatest difficulty picking his loaded bike up by himself, if it went over. Fred speaks Spanish and this made his trip more interesting as he met many diverse folks on his journey.

This is a remarkable story not just because of the miles covered (13,500) and the places visited, but because of the kindness and helpfulness of the really good people he met on the way. Enjoy.

John Ellis

Steve Kesingler is selling his 2003 K1200GT

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Comoto Holdings To Pay \$1.93 Million Fine

Comoto Holdings, the parent company to Revzilla, Cycle Gear and J&P Cycles, will pay a \$1.93 million fine to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for the alleged sale of non-exempted add-on/modified motorcycle parts in California.

"We take the sale of uncertified parts seriously as it can lead to significantly higher emissions that impact the health of California residents," said CARB Executive Officer Richard Corey. "It is also unfair to the vast majority of manufacturers who comply with clean air requirements."

news item from Cycle News Issue #24

According to a release by CARB, "Retailers and distributors must ensure the parts they sell have been evaluated by CARB prior to sale and proven not to reduce the effectiveness of the emission-control system. Such parts replace or modify vital original equipment emissions components and manufacturer-designed engine-operating conditions. Modifications to the engine and emissions control systems of motorcycles can lead to significantly higher smog-forming emissions and adversely affect public health."

Hose Removal Tool by Motion Pro

Regular readers of this newsletter will know I am always on the look out for specialist tools that make ones life easier. In the past I have struggled with the removal of both cooling and oil pipes. Might not be a problem when the bikes are new but after a few years these things stick fast. If there is enough space a screw driver will work, but typically this is not the case.

Motion Pro has a very simple tool that looks like it might help. One end is used to loosen stuck hose, the other end assists in pulling the hose off the fitting. Getting a pipe off without damaging the pipe or the fitting is a big plus.

I haven't actually used this tool but it might be something to add to your tool kit.



HIPCAMP

Jorgen Larsen contacted me this month and mentioned that he and his wife Mylene have been using the web site Hipcamp.com to finding interesting camp sites. I had never heard of Hipcamp before so I took a look. It looks very much like the camping equivalent of AirBnB. It list large campsites and group campsites, but more interestingly site small privately owned sites that are not really listed anywhere else. If you are looking to get away into the wilderness during this Covid lockdown you may want to check out this site.

Junction On Mines Road is Open

On Sunday I rode Mines Road for the first time in some months and surprise, surprise, The Junction was open. They have moved the order counter with a plastic barrier outdoors. The rule is that you must wear a facemask when ordering food. Seating is outdoors only, and even though there must have been around twenty bikes and cars there was still outdoor seating available. I asked the cashier and she said they are open Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. If you plan to go don't forget your facemask.

New Motorcycle sales holding up through Pandemic

Following a series of declining years though, 2020's data was already looking fairly optimistic; motorcycles sales in February of 2020 were up 3.5 percent (year-to-date), according to MotorcyclesData.com. But when the pandemic hit in early March and the auto industry began its sales freefall, most business insiders assumed the same fate would befall the motorcycle sector.

The surprising news came in early June, when the smoke cleared and the Motorcycle Industry Council reported that year-to-date retail powersports sales were better than they'd been in the past three years. "The powersports industry is in a

much more positive place than where we thought we'd be earlier this year, when the full impact of the pandemic began to come into focus," MIC President and CEO Erik Pritchard said.

BMW media rep Roy Oliemuller confirmed that BMW Motorrad's May 2020 North American motorcycle sales exceeded May 2019 sales, with much of that driven by the GS series adventure range (from the entry-level 310 to the big 1250s), and extending to the RR model as well. Overall, he said, these last few months have been an unanticipated "pleasant surprise."

news item from Cycle World by Andrew Cherney June 26, 2020

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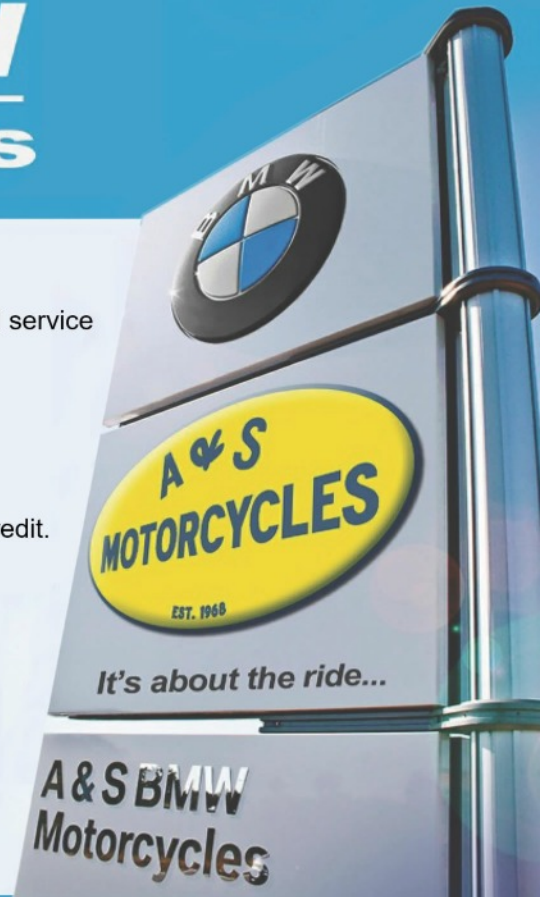
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Fred Montano Rides South America - Part 2

After riding together for three months and 18,000 miles, it was difficult to part company with Ed Perry. We enjoyed many experiences on the road. We shared difficulties. And most of all we had a good time meeting people and enjoying the culture of Latin America. Ed was a good partner and I was unsure how my journey would be without his support and interaction. However, I have always wanted to visit Montevideo and Iguazu Falls. Also, I was not ready to end my Bucket List Adventure. So I decided to continue my journey. My plan was that when I reached Iguazu Falls I would decide if I wanted to ride all the way back to Oakland or go back to Buenos Aires and fly home.

MONTEVIDEO

The day after Christmas I packed up and put my luggage on the bike. Ed followed me to the parking garage where we parked our bikes. We said our goodbyes and I was off on my solo journey to Montevideo. It was a beautiful day as I headed north to cross the Uruguayan border. The road was flat with rolling hills. A lot of farms and ranch land. Beautiful green scenery. I reached the border and they wanted proof of insurance for Argentina, (which I did not have). I showed them my Progressive Insurance papers (which they could not read). After one and a half hours I convinced them I had insurance coverage, (not true). I think they just got tired of me. I traveled to the little town of Trinidad, Uruguay. This was a nice stop. The town was very clean with good shops, restaurants, nice people, and an attractive plaza. I made sure to park in a safe place to get in and out easy. I realized that without a riding partner I would be



more cautious not to drop the bike or fall.

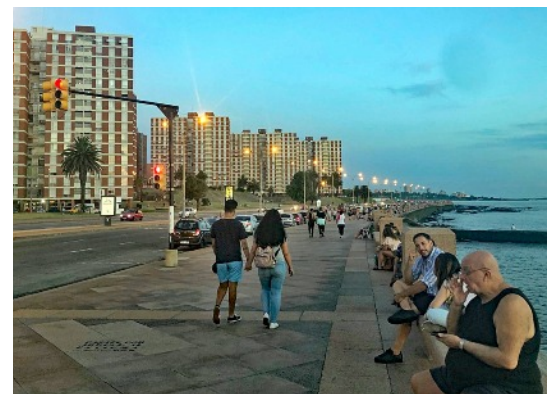
The next morning, December 27th, I had a good breakfast at the hotel. I put my stuff on the bike and headed to Montevideo. On the way I stopped at a motorcycle statue in San Jose, Uruguay. It was made in October 10, 2008 for the world motorcycle gathering in San Jose. This is a very bike friendly town and I enjoyed talking and drinking coffee with the locals. I continued to Montevideo. As I rounded a curve on the



highway I could see the beautiful port city of Montevideo. There were old and new boats anchored in the bay. Tall skyscrapers appeared and I could view a modern bustling city. As I rode through the wide boulevards I noticed traffic was organized and not aggressive or threatening. It was

more relaxed than many other South American country's. Street signs were noticeable and the streets and roads are well maintained. I pulled over at the center of the city to research and find a hotel. I settled on staying at the El Viejo Hostel. This was close to the center of town and close to where the action is. I checked into a room with eight beds. This was a new experience. I must have been the oldest tourist staying there. They gave me sheets and a pillow to make my bed. I went to the room and put my things in the drawers assigned to me. A new resident came in and took up another bed. I introduced myself. Marcelo was from Sao Paulo, Brazil. He is an English teacher so we conversed in English. He rode his Yamaha motorcycle from São Paulo to Montevideo. He was interested in my journey. He invited me to have lunch with his friend. I climbed on the back of his moto and we went through the streets of Montevideo to a nice restaurant by the beach. I met his friend Dennis (who also taught English) and Andrea (who is a journalist). We had a very lively conversation and enjoyed our time together. These people were intelligent and had traveled many places in the world. We ended our visit by walking on the beach and dipping our feet into the ocean. Montevideo has wonderful long wide and clean beaches. They invited me to go partying at a night spot. I declined since I was tired and well past my bedtime. It was so nice to enjoy the day and evening with these folks. We did not want the day to end. I returned to the hostel, had a shower and hit the sheets. It was very interesting as seven other room partners came in and out of the room. Some guys and a couple of girls. I must say they were respectful of people trying to sleep. I had a decent sleep and decided to stay another night. I met some very interesting characters.

The next day I located a car wash where I got the Africa Twin cleaned. I got breakfast at a restaurant across the street. As I sat down to have breakfast the weather turned. A very strong wind and rain blew into the city. Signs and paper were blowing down and flying across the street. I thought it was a tornado or hurricane. It was a fierce thirty minutes of bad weather. The guys at the car wash did a good job cleaning the bike. Now they wanted to take pictures sitting on my clean bike. We joked and had a good time. I rode back to the hostel and spent the rest of the day walking around town where senior citizens dancing in a park to the sound of street musicians. The streets are wide, clean and orderly. Not many street vendors. Very much like California. In the evening I walked to the sea wall where the locals go to watch the sunset where people were walking, jogging, skateboarding, and rollerblading on the sidewalk. I stayed there till the sun set and enjoyed the atmosphere. On my walk back to the hostel there was a drum core (band) practicing on the street. It was a wonderful end to my stay in Montevideo.



December 29th rolled around as I got up at six in the morning and quietly collected my stuff from cabinets and drawers trying not to wake up other people sleeping in the room. I left Montevideo at 7 AM and headed north to Iguazu Falls stopping on the way in San Jose for breakfast and gas. Met a young man riding a KLR from Buenos Aires. He had just broken up with his girlfriend and decided to ride for a few days. We had a chat about motorcycle therapy and adventure. It was a beautiful morning as I once again rode past farms, ranches, and rolling hills. The roads in Uruguay are two lane, good condition with little traffic. I arrived at the Argentine border where I had trouble entering into Uruguay. And once again customs requested to see my insurance papers. This time they did not accept my story about Progressive Insurance coverage. The Argentine customs officer almost did not let me into the country. After talking with the big boss, they lectured me and gave me a stern

recommendation to get insurance at my next stop. They finally let me enter Argentina.

My early start turned into a mid-day start after the problems at the border. The highway in Argentina was four lanes and clear with little traffic. But I noticed dark clouds in the distance. It would rain a little then stop. As I approached the dark clouds it began to rain harder, then it became a downpour. I could hardly see the road or the white lines. I reached a YPF gas station where cars, trucks, busses, and motorcycles were parked in any space possible. I found a space to park and went to an overhead shelter by a gas pump. I put on all my rain gear and waited for the cloud burst to stop. It was like a river from the sky. This lasted about 45 minutes then it subsided to a normal rain flow. While I waited I met a man from Lima that was riding a BMW 1200GS. This made the time go faster and I got a lot of information on roads and places to visit. The highway became visible again and we all got going to our destinations. My GPS directed me to a unused very pot holed road. The holes were huge and close together. The going was slow and I zig zaged back and forth. There were no other vehicles on the road for a good reason. When I saw farmers I would ask if this was the right road to Paso de la Libre, they would answer "Si". This was about 40km of slowly crawling along. I finally reached the main highway. It was getting dark by the time I reached Paso de la Libre. I found Hotel del Arte, which was very comfortable. I was glad to stop for the night and get dinner.

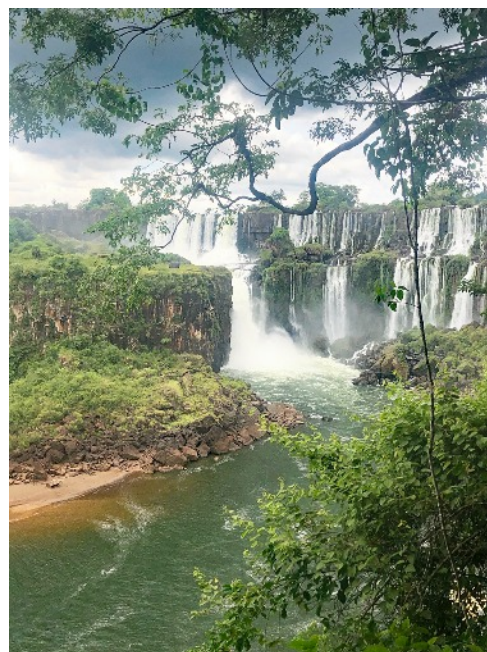
Iguazu Falls, Argentina

The road to Iguazu Falls was scenic with wide curves and forest vegetation. I arrived in Porto Iguazu by 4pm December 30th. I inquired at two hotels but there was no vacancy. I guess the New Years crowd had arrived to celebrate. I noticed a small rent sign in front of a lot. It had a driveway going down to a house. There was grass, a lot of plants, and banana trees almost covering the house. It was a beautiful relaxing setting. So I went into the yard and asked if they had a room to rent. The lady went to get a young man (turns out that this was a family situation and the man was her son). He said they did have a vacant room if I could wait until they cleaned it. No problema senior! I walked a couple of blocks into town and had lunch. I returned to the guesthouse. The room was large and very comfortable for 800 pesos (\$13 a night). I asked if I could wash my moto on the grass. Not a problem! I noticed they also ride Moto's. So I washed the Africa Twin and worked on maintenance items such as: glued the turn signal light that had broken in El Chelten, adjusted the chain, aired up the tires, and checked for loose bolts. Later in the evening Alfonso, the manager of the guesthouse, invited me to eat with the family for their traditional New Years Dinner. Wow, this was so unexpected and heart warming to be included with their family for New Years. They had been BBQ'ing all day. There was chorizo, beef, pork, pollo, tomato's and potato salad. Along with mango juice (made from their tree), and champagne. They made me feel totally included and welcome. I had a great meal and enjoyed the conversation. After dinner they set up chairs where we watched the fireworks in Brazil until



1am; (the frontier is very close - fireworks are not allowed in Argentina). This was a New Years Celebration I will never forget.

January 1st, 2020 - Happy New Year! I woke up early and caught the bus to Iguazu Falls (Cataratas de Iguazu). I wanted to beat the tourist's and enjoy the water falls and it was worth the effort. The falls are amazing! It is a spectacular sight and a display of nature's power and beauty. There is more water going over these falls than any other place in the world. It stretches between three



countries; Brazil, Paraguay, & Argentina. While I walked around the vast wooden walkways and steel bridges, I stopped to view the falls from different angles. A colorful butterfly landed on my hand and stayed awhile. It didn't want to leave until I started walking. I arrived at a spot where there was a snack shack. I decided to sit, rest, drink water and



eat the chips I bought. I opened the bag of chips and a large opossum came up to me. I thought I will not feed him but how cute. Before I knew it he jumped up and grabbed the bag of chips. We had a tug of war for about two seconds. He tore the bag open and all the chips fell to the ground. Now all the opossum's, about seven, were feasting on my chips. All the people around me had a good laugh and I even had to chuckle. These creatures knew exactly what to do. I don't think this was their first theft of food. My visit to Igunzu Falls was truly breathtaking display of Mother Nature. I returned to the guesthouse and called my son and wished him a Happy



Birthday. It was a good present for both of us and a great end to my fabulous New Year's Day.

On the second day of the year, I finally purchased moto insurance and wandered around town. I enjoyed talking with the locals and eating good food. It was a nice rest off the bike. I returned to the guesthouse to put my luggage on the bike and prepare to leave in the morning. My destination was Arequipa, Peru. I stayed four days in Porto Iguazu and enjoyed my stay very much. It is always difficult to leave a place and people I enjoy. But it was time to move on...

On January 3rd, I woke up my usual early morning time and packed my things on the Moto and sadly said "Adios" to my new found friends. My route went to Posada and Corrientes, (both are big cities with skyscrapers). The road was flat and straight with a few curves. The weather was cool with trees, green pastures, and a good road. There is a lot of cattle throughout Argentina. I stopped at a little village named Los Tigres. I was tired and spotted a hotel from the road. Again I was



lucky, the hotel had rooms available and a good place to park the Moto. Across the street was a very unassuming restaurant, it looked more like a house, but it was where I ate the best lamb ever. I sat and watched the sunset and talked with the man and lady that owned the place. In the morning as I was packing to leave, I had a visitor. A parrot walked into my room. He was not afraid and acted as if he owned the place. He looked at me, walked around then

walked outside. He later came back for a short visit. This was a nice occurrence and made me feel good to be there. I left again and made my way North East toward the Andes. The weather was warm and rather balmy. Within 50km the road turned into the worst potholed highway I have ridden. There were cars, trucks, busses, and Moto's swerving the deep and wide holes on both lanes. I was just glad it wasn't raining. After 30km of zig zag and dodging vehicles, the road happily smoothed out again. There was a 10km gravel road detour before I arrived in Jujuy, Argentina. I decided to find a room and stay the night. I looked around town but could not find a place so I decided to continue on the highway. Luckily there was a sign pointing to a hotel. I followed the narrow road that led me to a very upscale hotel. At this point I didn't care about price. Posta de Lozano was indeed a good upscale place. It cost me all of \$27 a night and well worth it.

Crossing the Andes

I left Posta de Lozano Hotel early and rode into the Andean Mountains. The weather was clear and cool. The road began to twist and turn and head upward. The Indigenous people were wearing the lama and alpaca clothes similar to what I had previously seen in the high Andes. The road was steep with switchbacks up the very high mountains. As I looked down the side of the mountain it reminded me of Bavaria or the Dolomites in Italy. I went over the pass at 4,300 meters (14,107 feet). I could feel the altitude and so could the Moto. The road flattened out as I got over the pass. I was on the high desert road to Salta. I arrived at the salt flats and pulled over at a tourist stop. It was time for water and a short rest. I continued to the Salta de Gama border crossing with Chile. I stopped at a YPF gas station to fill up, eat lunch, buy snacks, and spend Argentine pesos. After lunch I went to the border where three buses had stopped, (Oh darn another long wait). Two hours went by before I was finished and cleared to enter Chile. I left the border and followed the road that climbed further into the Andes. The road went up and up and up, twisting and climbing. The sky was filled with dark clouds and then it became foggy and it began to rain. I pulled onto the road shoulder to put on my electric vest and rain suit. The shoulder was soft sand and the kickstand began to sink. I held the bike up so it would not fall. I could only think how bad it would be to drop the bike in this weather with no one around. I stretched my leg to get a rock. It worked. I put the



rock under the kickstand and was able to get on the bike. This could have been a real problem. The rain had turned to snow and ice was forming on the road. I was cold so I stopped to put on my warm stuff. I was in the clouds and the wind was fierce. I could barely see the road so I slowed to a crawl. It was 15 miles of white knuckle riding. The road finally turned downhill and the snow became rain. After riding the pass at over 15,000 feet, I was happy to head down the mountain to clear



weather. Also, I was badly in need of gas. I arrived in San Pedro de Atacama and parked at the nearest gas station to get gas and Chilean pesos. I went into the station market and got a cup of coffee. While I sat there I met a father and son riding a BMW 650 Funduro. They were from Brazil. As we sat and talked about our ride over the pass, a SUV backed into my bike and knocked it over. Oh shit! We all rushed out to pick up the bike. The driver was very sorry and humble. His family was in the car and looked terrified. He helped as much as possible. The plastic cylinder holding tools was the only casualty, beside some scratches. I got out the gorilla glue and ROK straps. I told the driver of the SUV to be more careful and let him go. I followed

the Brazilian guys to a hostel. We stayed in the same room and enjoyed our evening talking motorcycles, rides, and world events. The father is a Renault Car salesman in São Paulo. The son is in high school. It was another very interesting day!

It was January 7th. I said good bye to Mauricio and his son Bernardo. They were on their way to Antofagasta, Chile. I rode around this very old city. Most of the houses are made of adobe. There was a big outdoor market and many people milling around. The streets are very narrow dirt and some pavement. The locals are mainly Indian. It looked like a primitive and simple way of life. I rode out of town into the mountains. There was a sign that labeled the area "Deserto de Muertos" (Desert of Death). This turned out to be a good ride with many curves, mountain climbs, and interesting scenery. I was heading to Calama, Chile, a very industrial town. From Calama to Arica, Chile, the road was straight as it descended from the Andes to the bleak desert of northern Chile. The road was good and I could travel fast. I arrived in Arica, the last city in Chile before the Peruvian border. It took awhile to find a hotel. I inquired at a few places but there were no vacancies. I stopped at Sol de Arica Hotel. They had a very nice room and a place to park the Moto in the courtyard. It was expensive at \$33 a night,. There was a good breakfast

included in the price. I had a nice evening and ate a fish dinner with wine at the hotel restaurant. This was my last night in Chile.

Arequipa

After a good breakfast and coffee con leche, I was ready to tackle the Peruvian frontier. Chile and Peru have combined their resources to make the border more efficient. It still took an hour and a half. I rode into Tacna (the first town in Peru), to get Peruvian Sols. After locating an ATM (Cajera) in a large Costco like store, I got back on the Pan Am Highway to Arequipa. The road from the Pan Am highway was hilly with a lot of curves and traffic. I arrived in Arequipa by 3pm. Now I had to find a room for a few days. The traffic in the city was congested, thick, and aggressive. I spotted two hotels by the street. I quickly stopped and asked if there was a vacancy. The answer was "NO". As I walked back to my bike I noticed a guy and lady riding two up on a scooter. They had parked behind my bike. The guy, Giancarlo, was interested in the Africa Twin. We talked about the bike and I answered his questions. I then asked if he knew a good hotel in the city. He said yes, he has a friend that has a hotel close to the center of the old city. He called his friend who said he did have a vacant room. Giancarlo said "follow me". He got on his scooter and we flew through the city splitting lanes and passing buses next to the curb. I didn't want to lose him through the traffic. We arrived at the Hotel Bavaria. I followed the scooter into a narrow driveway behind the hotel. The owner of the hotel, Heinz, also owned a warehouse in the back of the hotel. I parked my bike in the warehouse and we went into the lobby of the hotel. Giancarlo introduced me to Heinz, who had his receptionist check me into my room. What luck - I really fell into a good situation. We talked a short while. Heinz had to leave and I asked Giancarlo if he and his wife would like to join me for dinner. He said he had prior plans. He could not visit me the next day due to his work schedule, but would see me the day after. That night I walked into the old plaza and down narrow streets. I got lost and saw a lot of the city. The next day I took a city "on & off bus tour". Arequipa is an old city that was settled by the Aymu Indians before the Incas killed them off. The

Incas used this area to produce their food. The Spanish conqueror, Francisco Pizarro, claimed it a city in 1540. The city is surrounded by three volcanos and in 1860 the city was destroyed by earthquakes and volcano eruptions. It was rebuilt and is a remarkable symbol of Latino American history. I thoroughly enjoyed the bus tour and learned the history and culture of the city. The old buildings have been preserved and maintained in original style. This is a city of over two million people. It is the second largest city in Peru. After the tour I walked to the Old Plaza where there was a



celebration for a religious saint. People in the parade were dressed in indigenous costumes and masks. Two bands of drums, trumpets, and saxophones played the same primitive tune over and over.



The next day Giancarlo Peralta, the man who helped me find a hotel room, arrived to take me on a city tour. I learned that Giancarlo is an architect for the city and his family are old

established residents. His wife is also an architect for one of the districts in Arequipa. He graciously took time to show me around the entire day.



I found out that he rides a 750 Honda Moto and has three other motorcycles. He is a wealth of knowledge of this area and is well traveled. We went to some of the major churches, overlooks of the city, a famous sanctuary, a farm on the edge of the city, and a hydroelectric generating plant on the Chile river. He took me to the rock quarry where they mine most of the rocks to build houses and buildings. This was really special. We then went to lunch at a little restaurant and had local food. Giancarlo knew the owners well, so we got primo service. After lunch, Giancarlo took me to one of the projects he worked on. It is a five star hotel that was built in the 18th century. Giancarlo's speciality is restoration. This structure was magnificent and impressive. As he spoke with the manager of the hotel and others, I could see that he is well respected. We went back to my hotel. I invited Giancarlo to dinner. He said he would "Whats App" me if he is going to pick me up in the evening. I got a good rest and received a message that he would be by at 6:30pm. We left the hotel and drove past churches, stores, and buildings all lit up. It was amazing to see the city all lit up at night. Giancarlo drove to a location that overlooks the city. The streets are narrow and only local residents were there. He stopped at a structure at the top of the hill. We had to climb a lot of stairs to reach the top. The view of the city and surrounding area was fantastic. There were no other people or tourists there so we did not have to share the space. On our way back we stopped at a local restaurant and ate dinner. Peruvian comida is very tasty. We headed back to the Bavarian Hotel. It was the end of a terrific tour that you only get from someone that knows the city, the history, and is a resident.

Giancarlo said that if I stayed until Saturday he would show me other attractions in the area. However, the time comes when it is right to depart and experience another adventure. I reviewed the map and charted my course north to Lima and Trujillo, Peru. I reluctantly left Arequipa on January 11th. My destination was north of Lima somewhere. I rode the twisty, heavy traffic road to the Pan Am Highway. Then up the Peruvian coast. It was wonderful to see the Pacific Ocean again. The coast line is rugged and beautiful. The day was clear and mild. There was a rockslide on the road that took an hour to clear.

As I rode past the slide the wind began blowing sand across the road. It was difficult to see the road. In some spots the sand piled up on the road and caused the bike to dance back and forth. This made going slow for about 20km. I continued my ride toward Lima. I got through the Lima



traffic and continued north. I was stopped at a police check point north of Lima. They asked me for my license, import papers, and Peruvian insurance. I was really glad I bought insurance in Arequipa . I got to the little town of Huarmey, Peru. I stopped for gas and drain my bladder. I had noticed a Hotel sign by the middle of town. I got gas and circled back to town. The hotel was closed so I walked around to see if there was another hotel in town. As I was getting on my bike a man pulled up on a bicycle. He said he knew of a hotel further in town. He took me to the Venus Hotel that was past the plaza and down a few narrow streets. As luck would have it, the hotel was nice with a great parking spot for the



moto. It was cheap (35 sol's = \$12). Victor, the man on the bike, is an English teacher at the local school. He wanted to speak English and I wanted him to correct my Spanish. This was a good trade off. Victor also speaks Qechawa (Huarmey means Women in Qechawa). I invited Victor to dinner. He took me to a local restaurant where he knew the owners. We had good local cuisine and enjoyed our conversation. After dinner we sat around the Plaza and enjoyed all the activity. We conversed about our countries, economy, people, and language. We decided to have breakfast together in the morning. In the morning, Victor came by the hotel and we walked to the market. Inside the market were vendors of crafts, vegetables, meat, clothes, electronics, toys, auto parts & accessories, and eateries. Victor knew the women at one of the restaurants. He introduced me to all the cooks and people that run the place. I actually had two eggs, potatoes, and coffee con leche. One of the better breakfasts I had on the trip. I was enjoying the town and people, so I decided to stay another day. I took my laundry to the lavandaria and they washed and folded my clothes for 10 Sols (\$3). Then we walked to Victor's apartment where he showed me the sculptures he makes and sells. They are chiseled out of stone and depict classic Indian art. He is

very good! We jumped on a local van that took us to the Playa. It was a nice beach where kids and family's were playing and having fun. I walked around and dipped my toes into the water and talked with a few folks. We had fresh fish for lunch and enjoyed the beach atmosphere. We returned to the hotel and I prepared to leave in the morning. This was another great, unexpected stop.

I left Huarmey and headed to Ecuador. The weather was perfect. I noticed that the temperature was warming and the days were getting shorter. I rode through the desert mountains and by the coastline. The beaches looked fantastic. I arrived at the border but turned back to a small town to get gas and lunch. After a great meal and visit, I went back to cross the border into Ecuador. There was a line of truck drivers clearing customs so I had to wait. I arrived at 3pm and finally cleared Ecuadorian customs at 5:30pm. I finally completed all the customs paperwork and rode to the nearest town to get a room. Arenella is a nice small town. It is built on a hill and overlooks a green valley. I spotted a hotel sign and inquired about a room. Good place but no secure parking. So I went a few blocks and spotted old folks sitting on a porch by a hotel. Yes they had a vacant room. The secure parking was two blocks away. This turned out to be a perfect spot and I met a very nice gentleman who owned the property. I learned that Winston Gomez (owner where I parked) and Henrique Louis (Hotel Owner), worked together at a factory and retired at the same time. Interesting group of people. I walked around town and enjoyed the peace of a small town. When I left in the morning Henrique Louis was there to greet me and say Adios. I walked over to get my bike that was locked behind a fence. Winston was there to let me in. He had a slice of watermelon for me. We talked and enjoyed our visit. He wanted to get a picture sitting on the Africa Twin. I left Arenella thinking how lucky I am.



Guayaquil

I said Adios to Winston Gomez. My destination was Cuenca. However, I took the wrong exit at a roundabout. The road was going to Guayaquil. I decided to continue to Guayaquil. The scenery changed from the desert of Peru to green fields of banana trees and other plants. The mountains were on the east side of the road and are totally covered in green bushes and trees. It was a beautiful sight with miles of banana tree plantations. I arrived in Guayaquil and stopped to get gas. There was a nice food store with a restaurant. It was time for lunch. I met the manager, who's mother owned the place. He had traveled to the USA and enjoyed the visit. Another customer, Henry Cevallos, is an avid moto rider and was interested in my journey. Henry recommended that I visit the coastal town of Salinas & Manta. I continued to the center of Guayaquil. However my GPS decided to go wacky. It directed me up a hill and turn right down a narrow street that was a dead end. The problem was that there was not enough room to turn around. I was stuck! I could not push the bike up hill to turn around by myself. A young man came over to help. We managed to get the front wheel heading almost uphill. As I started going forward my foot slipped on the gravel. The bike quickly fell over and landed on a cement barrier. Damn.... I was not hurt but my thoughts were "How do I get out of the mess?". As I surveyed the situation, three guys came out of their houses to help. They helped pick up the bike and were concerned about my safety. One of the guys handed me a piece of plastic that had broken from the side panel of the bike. They gave me directions to the city center. I got on the bike, it started, I said gracias y adios; and was glad to get going. Whew...

Guayaquil is a huge port city and one of the major old cities in Latin America. The city center has high rise structures and a beautiful Plaza that is very active. The traffic is thick and congested. I parked and walked around the Plaza and visited the old buildings and church. The port is a natural setting with many boats bringing in goods and exporting products to all the world. I decided to travel to the tourist coastal town of Salinas.

I left Guayaquil and headed west to the coast. The ride was beautiful and uneventful (Thank God!). Salinas is located at the most western point of

South America. It is a huge tourist destination. There are high rise apartments along the malicon. The beach area is very attractive with restaurants, vendors of all sorts of stuff, and pleasure boats in the harbor. I located a hotel two blocks from the beach for \$20 a night. I parked in the courtyard then walked along the malicon. The beach was beautiful with plenty of people enjoying the ocean. I walked to a local restaurant and had the best shrimp ceviche ever.

Quito

In the morning I charted a course to Quito, Ecuador. The coastal road was picturesque and enjoyable. There were villages with raised houses and roofs with palm tree branches. I saw many fishing boats and people enjoying the weather and ocean. Plenty of surfers and tourists staying in these old beachfront houses. There were talapas on the beach. I was tempted to stop, change, and go for a swim. The highway was lined with fruit trees. Ecuador feeds the world with bananas, mangos, papayas, pineapple, watermelon, and more. There were many fruit vendors on the side of the road. If I had room on the bike I would have stopped. After I reached Manta (a major town in this area), the road began to gradually head into the mountains. Sporadic rain began to fall. I saw black clouds in the sky. In Santo Domingo I stopped for gas. It was hot and humid. The traffic became thick with trucks. I took the Moto method of passing on the oncoming lane while there was no traffic coming in the other direction. This is acceptable in Latin America. The road started to rapidly climb the mountain. The turns were tight and steep. There were many trucks spewing diesel smoke and going slow. There were a few passing lanes but not very long. I passed when I could see around them and took a few chances. I was riding high into the Ecuadorian mountains. Fog was beginning to set in. I slowed down and took it easy. I reached the top of the pass (I think, since I could not see much). As I descended, the fog went away and I could see the cloud hanging over the mountain I just passed. It was a breathtaking view. The sun went down by the time I finally reached Quito. The traffic was congested and difficult. I do not like riding in the dark, especially when I'm searching for a hotel. I had just enough charge on my iPhone to locate a Hotel close to the old center of town. On my way I got stuck in the bus lane and had to find an exit. It was very dark as I tried to get back into the car lane. I

twisted the accelerator and pointed the bike toward the car lane. I hit a curb that I did not see, the bike went flying into the air. I crash landed in the middle of the street. My foot was stuck under the bike and I could not get out. I was lucky that all the cars stopped and did not run over me. Two motorcycle riders quickly stopped and picked up the bike. They were concerned about my health. I got up, walked around and did not feel any broken limbs. My ankle was sore. We moved the bike to the side of the road. The riders made sure the bike was rideable before I got back on. I finally got back on the bike and it started up. It was too dark to see any damage. Once again, I was so thankful for the help and profusely said Munchos Gracias! to the guys who helped me. The GPS actually took me directly to the Las Posadas Colonial Hostel. This turned out to be a real find in the old part of town. It was fortunate they had a vacant room especially after my experience. The owner was very nice and understood moto travel. He had a safe place to park the moto alongside the hostel. The room was great. I decided to stay three days to see the city and rest. I booked an on/off city tour of Quito.

This is the second highest city in the world at 9,300 feet, (La Paz is the highest). It was named by the Incas. The Spanish kept the name and declared it a city in 1535. Quito established its own government in 1870. Petroleum, agriculture, and textiles are the main economic products. There are beautiful churches throughout the city. I visited art galleries, the hill overlooking the city with the statue of the Virgin Mary, parks, restaurants, old government buildings. I really enjoyed the street musicians. I was half a block from the Calle Ronda (Street around the old city). At night there is plenty of activity, musicians, people eating in old restaurants, & dancing. At one of the underpasses there was a trombone player playing jazz, salsa, bosanova, and local tunes. He was a very good musician. The street was lit up and very festive.

After three days of enjoying the sights in Quito I headed to the Equator (La Metad Del Mundo). This site is very close to Quito. This is a very impressive and interesting monument and historical site. I spent the morning reading the history and visiting each of the houses that explained the science and development of the Equator. I couldn't help having a picture taken with one foot on the north side, and the other foot on the South side. I met one of the curators of the museum. A very





interesting and knowledgeable man. I left at midday to the Colombian border. I stopped in Tulcan, the last town in Peru. I had dinner and stayed at a funky but nice hotel. I wanted to cross the border early in the morning.

Within twenty minutes I was at the border. It only took 45 minutes to cross from Ecuador to Colombia. What a surprise! The ride through the Colombian mountains was beautiful. It began to rain and there were a few construction zones. I didn't have to wait long but the traffic was not good. I stopped for gas in a small village. There was a restaurant close by. To my surprise I had the best fish ever.



The chef was a lady from Venezuela. She was a good cook. I talked with her and thanked her for such a good meal. I found a hotel north of Popayan and stayed the night. Tomorrow I will ride to Cali and on to Medellin. I will have the African Twin serviced in Medellin and stay at my favorite hotel, 61 Prada. I enjoyed the mountain roads and went by a few construction zones. I arrived in Medellin at night. The traffic was thick and the moto riders ride very

fast, reckless, and unpredictable. They pass on the right, left and in between. They are like bees swarming all around. I stopped at a gas station to relax and have a snack. I set the GPS for the 61 Prada Guesthouse. To my surprise it took me directly to the hotel. Luke, the owner, and his trusty good looking partner, Maria Louisa, remembered me from my stay in October. They were very curious about my journey.

In the morning I had a good breakfast at the guesthouse restaurant.. I met Clint and Alice Brown. They are a father & daughter traveling together. Alice works for environmental services in Boston. Clint is a retired nuclear engineer. He rides an R1200R BMW and was really interested in my ride to Ushuaia. They had booked a tour to a garbage dump that was turned into habitable space. We decided to have dinner later on. I went to the Honda shop through all the city traffic. The shop is big, clean, with the latest tools and professional technicians. I was impressed with the people and their efficiency. It should not surprise me since there are so many Moto's in this city. I had them put on new tires, brakes, air filters, check the valves, and change the oil. It would take three days. While I was at the shop I received a call from my niece. My brother Hank was taken to the hospital with pneumonia. She would call me later with an update. Depending on the prognoses, I would arrange to store my bike here and fly home to be with my Bro who was 88. I took a cab back to the Guesthouse for a rest and dinner with Clint & Alice. The salmon was excellent as was the conversation. Clint and I did not

stop talking until after 10pm. He had a plane to catch at 7am in the morning. That evening I got a call from my niece saying that my brother was feeling better. The doctor would extract fluid from his lungs in the morning. Luke, the owner of the guesthouse, said I could leave my bike there if I had to fly back home. In the morning I went to the Honda shop to select the tires for my bike. I walked around the area where they have many motorcycle shops and almost any accessories you can imagine. I received a call from my niece. She told me that Hank's heart stopped beating at 9:17am. Hank, my brother and closest friend and lifelong mentor, had passed away. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I had to sit down and catch my breath and emotions. My brother had urged me to take this journey before my energy and strength would subside due to age. Now he was gone. What a bummer! My niece told me not to hurry home. They would wait for me before scheduling a memorial. I decided I would continue my journey in honor of my brother, Henry Montano. RIP!



I reserved a bicycle tour of Medellin scheduled for 10:30am. I took a taxi to the meeting location. I met Santiago, the guide and two other guys taking the tour. Eugene was from Russia. Marcus was from Atlanta. Santiago knew the city, the history, and many interesting places to visit. We rode up a steep hill overlooking the city. Then we went to see the famous sculptures of fat people by Francisco Ordonez.



After the tour Marcus and I had lunch and wandered around. I caught a taxi back to 61 Prada. The next day, January 27th, I walked around town looking around and enjoying life in the city. There were vendors, moto repair shops, places that looked like a flea market, food carts, and restaurants. I stopped and had lunch at a food cart and talked with the locals. Interesting how people adapt to how they can make money to live. I returned to the Guesthouse and made calls to reserve boat transport from Cartagena to Panama. This was my plan since I did not catch the boat on the way down. I soon found out that the government of Colombia has made it very difficult to transport a motorcycle via boat to Panama. The Stalratte, which is a famous boat that transports Moto's, is in Cuba. I struck out on the boat idea. Air freight was my only option. So I decided to ride to Bogota and air freight me and the bike to Panama. I received a call from the Honda shop. My bike was serviced and ready to pick up. The head mechanic showed me all the replaced parts and took time to explain their work. I gladly paid the bill and rode back to the Guesthouse. I spent the rest of the day replacing the Mosko Moto Luggage on the bike and packing all my stuff. I planned to leave early in the morning to Bogota.



Bogota

It was January 30th, I was packed up and ready to ride to Bogota, Colombia. It was a maze of streets and turns to get out of the city. The GPS was working good. After a few frustrating moments and playing bumper car chicken, I was heading up the steep hill toward Bogota. The weather was clear and cool. The road was two lanes through beautiful rain forested mountains. Very curvy, dramatic climbs and descents. I arrived in the city in about five hours. It took time to find the

exporters office. The street numbering system in Bogota is confusing. After hiring a Taxi to lead me to the office, I located "Oneworld Logistics". This exporter was associated with Teofilo Exports we used in Panama coming down. The guy I was supposed to meet was not there. I met Oscar, his assistant, and he began the paperwork. They had quoted a higher price to export my motorcycle than I was prepared to pay. I talked with Teofilo, who said he would reduce the price. Oscar helped me locate a great guesthouse close to the office, Hotel Boutique Mendoza. The lady at the guesthouse mentioned that if I needed an exporter she had a good recommendation. The next morning I was called by Ailmer, from One World Logistics, stating that I needed SOAT Moto Insurance. I did not get insurance at the border. He said, this was necessary before I could export my motorcycle. I spent the entire day trying to get moto insurance. I finally took a cab downtown to the main insurance office. Within a few minutes I had insurance. I returned to the One World Logistics office with the paperwork. Oscar said that the bike would be shipped Monday. I once again asked for a firm quote. He had to talk with Ailmer first. The next day was February 1st. I spent the day resting and enjoying life around the vibrant area close to the hotel. I received a call from Jason, my son. He is planning on meeting me in Costa Rica. His friend works for Jet Blue Airline and can get a cheap ticket to Liberia, Costa Rica. Great! I would meet him February 7th at the airport in Liberia. On Sunday I took a long ride through the mountains to use most of the gas in the tank before the bike is shipped to Panama. It was a fun ride. There were hundreds of bicycle riders on their Sunday outing through the mountains, coffee plantations and small villages. I returned in the late afternoon. I packed my luggage and prepared to take the moto to the Airport in the morning.



Monday February 3rd, rolled around and I had not received a firm quote for exporting my bike. I became very concerned. Once they have your bike and paperwork they can charge you whatever before they release it back to you. I decided to call the exporter the lady at the hotel had mentioned. This was a good decision. Veronica Mosquera at Cargorider was professional and really knows the moto export business, (I found out I did not need Moto Insurance to export my bike). By that afternoon the bike was at the airport and ready to be shipped on Tuesday. The cost was \$1,150.00. Two guys, Jesus & Levi, finished getting the bike ready to send to Panama in the morning. I booked a flight and flew out at 8:40am. The flight was 1.5 hours to Panama. The Africa Twin was already at the Cargo Pack terminal. I cleared Panama customs and got going north to Costa Rica. The road from the airport was a good freeway. My plan was to clear Panama City suburbs and get a hotel north of the city. Traffic was thick but I finally arrived at a hotel. I had dinner and was glad to retire to bed. It was a long day. In the morning I headed to Costa Rica. When I arrived at the border there was a problem with my paperwork. The customs officer at the airport put the wrong information on the export permit. They thought I had two motorcycles. It took two hours to convince them that it was a mistake and I only had one moto. They finally let me go to the Costa Rican customs office. It only took 30 minutes to get into Costa Rica.

Costa Rica

I continued my ride to San Jose, Costa Rica. I made a wrong turn and it took a long time to get back on the Pan Am Highway. San Jose is a huge city with skyscrapers and traffic. I stopped and reset the GPS. I finally got good info and set a course for Liberia. By now it was dark, "No Bueno"! Here I go tired and hungry and again in the night darkness. I rode about 50km and spotted a Hotel sign north of Corderia. I stopped but there was no vacancy. The lady said to try the place across the highway. I was ready to sleep under a tree at this time. I rode across the highway and down a gravel lane that led to an old hotel. I met an old man who needed a cane to walk. It was an old structure that had a terrace and balcony. I suppose it was once the best hotel around. But like a lot of places in Latin America, it had fallen into disrepair. At this point I did not care. He had a vacant room and I gladly paid the man and went to bed.

It was January 7th, so I rode directly to the Liberian Airport to meet Jason when his plane arrives. I found out that his plane would not arrive til later. So I had breakfast at a McDonald's and found the Airbnb that Jason reserved. It was a good place to stay. Jason arrived around 1pm. It was a happy reunion. We had a lot to talk about. We had dinner in town and decided to go to the Playa Hermosa in the morning. The playa was great. The beach was really nice, warm water, and good restaurants. We went swimming, had smoothies, and ate pizza. We had dinner in Liberia at our favorite Mexican restaurant. It was special to spend time with my son in Costa Rica. We asked Nuria, the owner of the house, for recommendations of places to visit. We settled on a visit to Monteverde Water Falls. We rode on a two lane road then turned off on a gravel road that went up hill into the mountain forest. The scenery was spectacular. We stopped at a restaurant and had lunch then left to see Monteverde. It is a pretty mountain town. We stopped and asked directions to the waterfall. No one seemed to know where it was. So we continued riding to the Park Sanctuary. We paid the entrance fee and began to hike the trails through the rain forest. It was not long before we noticed a sign to the Cataratas (Water Fall). We enjoyed the hike, water fall, birds, plants, trees, and wild geography. We decided to stay the night in Monteverde. Jason reserved an Airbnb that was located in a hidden sanctuary. We could not find the place. We asked around and finally a lady at one of the hotels knew where it was located. It was down a steep rocky gravel road with no sign indicating a hotel. It was an old wood cottage structure that was very comfortable looking. We were not sure this was the place. Jason got off the bike and inquired, "yes this was the place". It was also a coffee plantation. The older lady that was dressed for church, checked us in to a very nice room. We got on the bike and headed back up the rocky gravel road. There was a good restaurant before the top of the hill. We had a beautiful dinner with wine and all the trimmings. We returned to the hotel and bed. Another great day! We woke up in this cottage-like hotel surrounded by a rain forest. The older lady, owner, was cooking breakfast for us. Eggs, rice, fruit, and great coffee. The family teaches



cooking and gives tours of the coffee plantation. We were a little late for the plantation tour but they let us join in anyway. It had just started. We learned that the lady's son, Christopher Sanchez, was a master coffee grower. He gave us an exceptional tour of the organic coffee plantation. This included a history of coffee beans and how it started in Costa Rica. This was a very interesting visit. We returned to Liberia and watched a soccer game between two local teams (San Jose & Liberia). Nuria & Pedro, her husband, were really into the game. They were cheering for Liberia. The game ended in a tie.

February 10th, Nuria, owner of the house, told us about San Juanillo village that has a beautiful secluded beach. We decided to go to San Juanillo. We were stopped at a police checkpoint. I had my passport but left the moto documents at the hotel room. The policeman was not

thrilled. He lectured me and said he could give me a ticket and impound the moto until I showed him the moto documents. I apologized for my error and stayed quiet. He finally let us go with a stern warning. We went back to the house to get the moto doc's. We again got on the road to San Juanillo. In Santa Cruz the GPS led me on a gravel road heading to Juanillo. No problem I can do this. The road went up big hills, the gravel was packed and not too many rocks or deep ruts. We got to the top where there was a communication tower. I rode over the top and looked down a narrow steep road with huge ruts, boulders, and loose dirt. Oh! Oh! I could not get any traction as the bike slid into a rut. Down we went. We got up and looked at the bike and tried to assess the situation. A local man and his elder father came over the hill on an old 150cc Yamaha. He stopped to help us. There was no one else on this road. It was pure luck that this gentleman came by. They were local folks and knew the road from many years of riding. The guy helped us pick up the bike and get it out of the rut. I got on the bike and rode it for about 10 yards trying to navigate this monster hill. Oh no! We picked up the bike again. Jason said he would try to ride it down the hill. Within a few feet he went down. The right foot peg broke. The guy helping us, Roberto, said we should walk it down. I was hot and tired. Jason had me take off my riding jacket, rest on a rock and drink water. Jason and Roberto walked the bike down to a flat spot. It was 95 degrees and 80 percent humidity. I walked down and met them. We decided to ride the bike from this point. However, when Jason got on the bike I could not hold it and we went down again. *Shit!* We picked it up again, got on, and rode off. It was a rocky ride and not easy but a lot better than that hill and loose dirt. We finally arrived in San Juanillo. The TiKi restaurant, coastline and beach was wonderful. Hardly any people to contend with. Palm trees grew all the way to the beach. It was like out of a tourist post card. Jason got on the web and found an AirB&B at the Marabella Surf Camp, (this was next to the beach). We could not wait to get into the water. Jason went for a long swim and I had fun splashing around. We had dinner at the rustic Tiki Restaurant. Our cabin was simple, rustic, and open to the ocean breeze. This was a beautiful place to stay and rest after our thrilling adventure on the mountain. We would have stayed another day if the foot peg wasn't broken and Jason wasn't leaving the following day.

After our adventurous ride on the coastal mountains, we rode to Santa Cruz looking for a welder to repair the broken foot peg. After stopping at a muffler shop, who did not weld aluminum, we were directed to a metal shop. They knew a guy who could help us. Xavier Seguro could weld almost anything. He fixed 4X4's for off road racing. After lunch we went to his out of the way shop. Jason removed the bracket from the exhaust pipes and Xavier went to work. In a couple of hours it was fixed and Jason installed the repaired foot peg. It looked new and worked perfectly. It was great to have a foot peg again. We ate dinner in Liberia and went back to our Airbnb. I later discovered that the GPS was turned to Off-Road/Fastest Route (this was a BIG mistake).



Time flies when your having fun! Jason flew to Costa Rica for seven days to visit and enjoy the adventure with me. We had so much fun discovering new places, seeing different things, and meeting people. We really enjoyed our time together. Now it was time for Jason to return home. Jason was taking a lot of stuff I did not use. The tools were heavy and things I purchased were bulky. We packed everything and I was amazed we could fit it on the bike and ride to the airport. We said our goodbyes. He went into the airport and I went back to the Airbnb and packed. I would ride to Nicaragua & Honduras in the morning.

February 13th, I rode through Nicaragua and stopped in Choluteca, Honduras. The road by Lake Nicaragua is scenic. Crossing the borders took five hours. At the Honduran border I rode past a border guard, (he was dressed like a local guy who wants to help for dinero). I had to return to him to get paperwork approved to import my moto. He was pissed! He threatened to fine me and make life difficult. But in the end he lectured me and sent me on my way. I apologized profusely! By this time it was getting late and the sun was going down. I had to ride 50km to Choluteca to find a hotel. Casa Del Sol Hotel was another rare find and a good place to stay.

Happy Valentine's Day! I remember that it was nine years ago today that I had a bicycle accident that scarred my nose and tore my retina. It is just a memory now. Today I rode to the El Salvadoran border. The ride was pleasant with green hills and wide curves. The only problem at the border was that we could not find the Aduana to clear the moto. While I waited I met a young couple from Switzerland that had been traveling in Latin America for one year. They were in a VW Westy Van that looked comfortable. We exchanged stories and passed the time until the Aduana arrived. I rode to Santa Ana. It was dark, there was a lot of traffic as I rode around looking for a hotel. I was in the old part of the city close to the main Plaza. I spotted a hotel sign-The Velvet Hotel. I stopped by the curb and pulled onto the sidewalk. A guy, Juan Carlo, came out of the hotel and asked if I needed a room. There was no garage or parking spot for the moto. He directed me to ride my bike into the lobby. Easier said than done! It is a busy street and there is a curb and a step in order to get into the lobby. Well - Here I go! JuanCarlo stopped traffic while I navigated into the hallway. I almost made it through without incident. However, the handlebar scrapped the wall and the front wheel turned into the wall. I crashed but didn't fall. I backed out enough to center the bike and park it in an alcove. Whoa.. That was close. The only damage appeared to be a scratch on the crash bar. The bike was now safe for the night. I decided to stay another night, rest and visit the town. In the morning there was a knock on the door. It was the lady that cooks and does everything else. She brought breakfast to my room. Eggs, beans, rice, tortilla's & salsa. I ate on the terrace and met JuanCarlo's son. He was going to his soccer game. I strolled around this beautiful old city. It was Saturday and many people gathered in the Plaza. There was a talent show in the afternoon. I bought a Pina (pineapple) Loco Drink and watched the show. The beautiful Cathedral had a five o'clock mass that I attended. I returned to the hotel around 8pm. The cleaning lady had washed and folded my clothes. I packed and got ready for my morning departure. This was a restful and interesting day.



Mexico

I backed out of the alcove at the Velvet Hotel without incident. I noticed that the handlebar on the bike was not straight. When I scrapped the hotel wall the handlebar got out of alignment. It was Sunday and no moto shops were open. So I continued to the Guatemala border. I reached Pajalapa, Guatemala, close to the Mexican border. The Santa Fe Hotel had excellent accommodations. And I noticed there was a Honda repair shop across the street. In the morning the mechanic adjusted the handlebar while I had breakfast. It was quick service and a cheap price. The Mexican border was only 10km away. It was an easy crossing out of Guatemala. The Mexican aduana was quick except for the import permit with the Bancajero (they require a \$400 deposit you get back when leaving the country). The clerk wanted copies of my paperwork. So I had to walk into town to get copies. This took time and it was hot and humid. I returned to the Bancajero clerk and received my import

permit. I didn't notice the permit was only for seven days instead of the normal six month permit I was accustomed to. This would cause a problem later on.

It was nice to be back in Mexico. It almost felt like being home. I rode to the little town of Arrigula, Chiapas. I stayed at a small run-down hotel, Hotel America. I liked the older man who ran the hotel with his wife. The room was simple, clean, comfortable and had hot water. In the morning I headed to Oaxaca. On the way I noticed a long line of trucks parked on the shoulder. I passed them and arrived in a little town where there were tires blocking the road. I stopped and looked at a man who was protesting. He picked up a tire so I could pass. I got to a truck that was parked across the road. I could not get around. There was a drop off on either side of the road. I noticed someone riding on a dirt road along side the paved road. So I decided to try and get around all the parked trucks using the dirt road. I was on the soft dirt road for three miles. The dirt turned into deep sand and my bike and I parted company. Oh shit! Now what do I do. No one around and I cannot pick up the bike in this soft sand. I decided to walk a half mile to the trucks that were parked on the highway and ask for help. I stopped at the first truck and asked the driver if he would help me. To my surprise he said yes and got another driver to help. We walked back to my bike and picked it up. They were happy to help and I was very appreciative of their assistance, (Mucho's Gracias!). I finally got on the paved road after three truck drivers helped pick up my bike and carry it around the eighteen wheeler parked across the road. On my way I noticed the truck driver that helped me pick up my bike. He was happy to see me and I thanked him again. When I got into Salina Cruz the road turned into the mountains. This was a fun curvy road that turned into the high mountainous region. I could see the valley for miles. I was stopped at a police checkpoint in Oaxaca. They wanted to see all my documents. I took my time getting all the doc's out of my luggage. The police reviewed the paperwork and let me go. I rode into town and enjoyed lunch and a stroll around the plaza. This is a cool town with a lot of history. I rode out of town and found a hotel close to the highway. It was quite an adventurous day. It was good to be back in the land of PEMEX, OXXO, and good Huevos Rancheros.

Villa Corona

On my way to Guadalajara I pulled behind a guy riding a BMW F800 at a Cuota Toll Booth. After paying the Autopista fee he stopped to talk with me. We shook hands and exchanged a few words. Rodrigo Ramos was riding to Guadalajara to meet a friend then ride to Puerto Vallarta. We decided to ride together. We stopped for gas and lunch. Rodrigo is a business consultant in Mexico City. He is a good rider and well traveled. His English was good. He rode to Alaska last year and has ridden throughout Central America and Mexico. We had much to talk about. The Autopista is in better condition than most freeways in the U.S. It is fast and easy to ride. No annoying speed bumps. The only drawback are the many Cuotas (toll booths) along the way. You can ride on the local "free" highway, that goes through towns and has speed bumps, if you choose. I stayed at the Hotel Del Sol in Tonalá, close to Guadalajara. In the morning I rode to Villa Corona where my brother in law's family live. I had stayed there one day on our way down through Mexico. I decided to stay with Luz and her family a few days. I arrived at noon and was given a royal welcome. Other family relatives came over to visit with me. We ate chile rellanos and they invited me to a taco dinner in the evening. Over the next few days I had a good rest and enjoyed my stay with family. On Sunday we attended mass and went to cousin Elvira's Restaurant. It was beautiful and decorated in good taste. The food was amazing. I had shrimp, octopus & salad. It was the best ever...

February 23, 2020 - I got up early and left at 7:30am. It is always difficult to leave very good people and a good environment. I enjoyed my stay with Luz and her family. I headed to Puerto Vallarta. This was a scenic coastal ride. The vegetation is green and lush. Tree branches on either side of the road touch and make a tree tunnel. I arrived and quickly found a hotel. People were playing in the water, laying on the beach, having lunch on the outside tables, and strolling on the malicon. At night the place comes alive with musicians, people eating in outdoor restaurants, and drinking wine and cocktails. I had a double scoop of ice cream. The skyline is attractive with condos, apartments, shops, and restaurants. The next morning I left this tourist town and rode to Mazatlan. I made a decision to take the ferry to Baja and ride to California from there. I

enjoyed Mazatlan again and booked the ten hour ferry ride to La Paz, Baja. There was a ferry leaving at 6pm the same day. I went back to the hotel and quickly packed. Then I enjoyed more of the coast and city before I had to get in line to board the ferry to La Paz. The ferry left the port. I stood on deck viewing the playa and city get smaller in the distance. The weather was perfect and the Sea Of Cortez was calm and beautiful. After the sun set, I sat down on one of the comfortable chairs. A guy came by and asked "How's your ride going"?. I looked up and answered in Spanish. He asked me where I was from and did I speak English. I said "Yes" and felt like I knew him. It turned out that he was Skip, the owner of Moto Discovery Tour's. He and Juan Stadamer were leading a tour of 13 riders to Copper Canyon and Baja. We had visited with Juan in Oaxaca in September on our way down to South America. Juan was very interested in the details of my adventure since our visit in Oaxaca. I met some of the riders on the Moto Discovery tour. We had a good chat and enjoyed the ferry crossing.

February 26th - I arrived in La Paz in the early morning. I rode straight to the Nuevo Pekin Hotel and checked in. I have stayed here before and enjoyed the hotel. I walked on the sea shore and enjoyed the ambiance of this beautiful malicon. I took a motorcycle ride around the town and suburbs. I stayed another day and got a good hair cut and just enjoyed the people, town, and rest. In the morning I packed my bike and rode to the old



and attractive town of Loreto. It has a link to some of the oldest history in California. The church dates back to 1565. The Camino Real started here. I had lunch on the plaza, went to the museum, and walked around. The port has a good view of the Sea Of Cortez. I left Loreto and rode to the Bahia de Concepcion to visit with Kurt & Marsha of Black Dog Motorcycle Accessories. I wanted to thank them for their products. I really gave them a lot of use on my trip. Lynn, Kurt's neighbor, told me that Kurt was not home but would return. She mentioned that there were a couple of rooms for rent by the restaurant only a few doors down. I checked into a nice room and quickly went to the hot spring. That felt so good on these old bones. It was Saturday night so there was a hamburger & movie night at the restaurant. I sat with Lynn & Michael and had an interesting visit. They are from Fort Collins, Colorado and stay in Baja in the winter. In the morning I was having breakfast and noticed a bearded guy on a fat tire bicycle. I asked him if he knew Kurt. His response was "I am Kurt". I didn't know him with a beard and dressed in beach clothes. He sat down and we had a great long conversation about motorcycle adventure. We took pictures in front of his beach home then I took off to



Mama Espinosa's in El Rosario. I had a great Mexican dinner and met three motorcycle guys riding from Vancouver, Canada. They were riding to Cabo. I had a good nights rest and I was ready to ride in the morning. It rained all night but stopped in the morning. On the way to Ensenada it got cold so I stopped to put on my electric jacket and rain gear, (I had not used these since Colombia). I stayed at a hotel close to the malicon and the next day will cross the U.S. Border.

California

Ensenada was cool with a bit of sprinkling. I rode around town and took photos of boats in the harbor and the police guard lining up for a parade. I rode north on Highway

3 to Tacate and got to the U.S. Border quickly. Too quick! I had to circle back through the Mexican Border to check out of Mexico and get my moto import deposit. I had no problem with customs. I went to the Banjercito to get my deposit of \$400 credited back to my account. The clerk checked out my bike and took pictures of the vin number. Then we returned to the office. She took awhile to return from the back room. She informed me that I had a seven day pass to enter and exit Mexico. Since I exceeded the time limit, Mexico will not return my deposit. I had a frank discussion with the clerk and I talked with her supervisor. He was very matter of fact and informed me that, although it is customary to issue a six month permit, I was given a seven day permit and I exceeded the time limit. He went on to inform me that he could keep my motorcycle since I exceeded the approved time limit. I was pissed! But hearing this I got on my bike and entered the United States. I enjoyed my visit to Mexico and did not let this administrative miscommunication deter from my experience. I should have paid closer attention to the Moto Import Details. I rode across the border and stopped to have a burger, chill out, and call my cousin in San Bernardino. She was happy to hear from me and glad I made it back from my long journey. I stayed with cousin Louisa a couple days and enjoyed the rest. We had a good visit but it was time to ride home to Oakland. CalTrans was demolishing a bridge on Highway 5 in Burbank so I took a detour. I rode to Mojave and then to Bakersfield. The weather was cool and clear. It was a boring fast ride. I arrived home Friday March 6th, at 4pm.

Back Home

My journey to South America was an adventure of a lifetime. I rode on beautiful and challenging roads. Pavement, gravel, dirt, and mud. Dry, dusty, and wet. I saw huge dramatic mountain peaks and valleys. Rivers, streams, lakes, glaciers, the Panama Canal, and the Straits of Magellan. It was a fantastic experience riding at over 15,000 feet in the Andes. Machu Pichu and Lake Titicaca were a thrill to see. The major cities of Central and South America were challenging to navigate but beautiful to see and enjoy. Urshuaia, Argentina, the southern most city on the American continent, was my goal. Wow - I made it! I rode solo from Buenos Aires to Oakland, saw Iguazu Falls and enjoyed every moment. The one thing that made this journey priceless and exceptional are the people I met along the way. The people in Latin America are friendly, helpful, and inclusive. This was an experience, adventure, journey, and thrill of my life.

Fred Montano



The trip lasted 5 months and 3 weeks.

Distance covered 31,458 miles

Gas \$2,350 USD

3 sets tires \$740

Maintenance \$1,182

Air fare me \$455

Air fare bike \$2,125

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Food \$3,600

TOTAL \$15,942- average of \$87/day



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