

A Stormy Ride

From Wyoming we crossed the border into South Dakota planning a short stop to see what Sturgis looked like a week after bike week. (expletives deleted) we left Sturgis none the more impressed than when we arrived. Ah, Ha! A Cabila's just down the road. Here we purchased new rain pants, gortex, for me. Wondered the store for bargains and decided that we still had a long ride to Mitchell, SD and surely wouldn't make it before dark.

It had been a beautiful day, temps were just right, slight overcast so no glaring sun, but now evening was upon us and the sun was beginning to set, a most wonderful sight in the side view mirrors. Ahead of us the conditions were changing rapidly. A storm front was moving in dark rolling clouds filled the sky reflecting the orange/red sunset behind us. Then the lightening filled the clouds and the wind started to blow. Darkness was upon us rain streaked the windshield. The wind picked up the rain started coming in sheets, only ten more miles to our exit. Oh, no! Road construction to add to the confusion. Raining harder, wind picking up and pushing us around.

Then the full force of the storm hit us. Visibility? None existent, horizontal rain sustained winds (we found out later @ 70mph, blowing roofs from barns and houses, pole poles snapped like tooth picks) and yes, we were in the middle of it all. Riding at about a 45-degree angle to keep the bike upright to be able to slow down, find the right side of I-90 to be able to stop? Impossible. The wind carried us across the highway twice, the third time we had slowed to a crawl and able to get the bike off the highway and into the median without dropping it. Holding the bike up against the wind to keep it from blowing us over took every ounce of strength I had.

A car carrier that we had passed several times along the route stopped to assist us. A DNR truck with a yellow flasher pulled in behind us to warn on coming traffic that we were there. A HUGE thanks you to these people.

Finally the wind and rain let up enough to allow me to move the bike to the right side of the highway and into a safer position. Still strong winds and rain and not ready to go on we waited until the rain and wind subsided enough to allow us to continue to our exit, escorted by the DNR truck and his yellow caution light announcing our progress.

We safely exited to Mitchell and pulled into the motel followed by the SD state police who had been alerted that there was a bike in trouble on the expressway. We assured him that with the help of several thoughtful people, highlighting the trucker and DNR that it was us and that we were fine physically, mentally was another story.

We thanked our escort, offered dinner at a place of his choice for him and his family, which he politely declined and departed.

We stood next to our yellow '09 GW1800 w/matching Bushtec trailer under the protection of the motel overhang as it was still raining and immediately embraced, kissed, laughed, cried and repeated the actions several times not believing what we had just been thru' and were there to talk about it.

The local news the next morning confirmed the conditions we survived. It was two weeks before the nightmares started tapering off. Occasionally we talk about the experience and a chill will go up my back and tears to my eyes that we made it to be able to tell about it. Even now I find it difficult to write about w/o choking up.

Our motto has always been that "your dead longer than you are alive" I guess that's why this past summer our ride to Oregon, Washington, California and all points in-between from Sebring, Florida will put us on the road again next spring heading up the East coast to explore the New England states.

Be safe, Ride safe

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