



720

Hendersonville

to

Savannah

THOMAS EVANS

H2O

Hendersonville to Savannah

*A 639-Mile **Bicycle Ride** from Hendersonville, Tennessee to Savannah, Georgia over a period of **fourteen days**.*

*The tour was the 2017 brainchild of and produced by **Bob Schofield of Brisbane, Australia***

*After a two year COVID delay, members of **FOGBEE Bicycle Club** rode the tour in May 21, 2022.*

By

Thomas Evans

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

H2O was the concept and detailed plan of Bob Schofield of Brisbane, Australia. He was unable to participate in the tour itself. He, Bruce Day, and Thomas Evans (author of this report) of Hendersonville, Tennessee contributed to the ***Crazy Guy on a Bike*** (CGOAB) that documented the bike tour. Day authored the daily CGOAB journals. Unless specifically noted, none of those journals were copied to this report.

Day validated the map routes and cue lists that were initiated by Schofield. Schofield also selected the initial motels and SAG schedules. Day and Evans finalized those motels and SAG assignments. Day took most of the photos shown in this report. Dave Shumaker (Hendersonville) and Evans also took many of the photos. Evans did the final photo editing.

Evans prepared the FOGBEE documents of the 2012 Silver Comet.

Thomas Evans
June 27, 2022

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OVERVIEW

In December 2016, Bob Schoefield, aka Aussie Bob, initiated his latest American bike tour. He set the date for his H2O <http://bicycledlife.topicwise.com/doc/H2O> from Hendersonville Tennessee to the ocean via Savannah Georgia around September/October 2020. Well, that was what he thought. Unexpectedly, every six months he had a revised date.

H2O was an inn-to-inn, two-and-a-half week-long, supported bike tour. Bob detailed his excursion as his journal on ***Crazy Guy on a Bike***. In early 2019, he had his plan together and invited others to join. Bob had been planning and leading bike tours for the last twenty years and he had a core group of about six bicyclists as friends whom he could anticipate. They loved to bike tour and traveled with Bob, Bruce Day, or Tom Evans who also led and documented tours. As backup and ready to help, Tom was following on his blog <https://bobs-h2o.blogspot.com/> Bob's content.

Typically, the core group contained experienced retired bicyclists. Likewise, it was not unusual for other bicyclists such as the members of their FOGBEE bike club to tag along for part of the ride and to provide their support. Inn-to-inn meant that everyone roomed in the evening in motels. In the past, some have camped and coordinated with the motel people. As supported, the group had a van accessible at designated stops for service and emergency backup.

Around March/April 2020, COVID changed Bob's plan. He was quarantined in Australia. Finally, in November 2021, when it finally looked like he had a tour date for May 21, 2022, on April 28, 2022, Putin changed his schedule.

Hi All, After much thought and in consultation with Eve, I've decided to withdraw from the Hendersonville/Savannah ride, as currently scheduled.

The current conflict situation in Ukraine and the threats Putin is making against Europe in general and Finland, in particular, have us very perturbed. We have a round-the-world booking with Finnair, so as long as we are reliant on that, we are committed to flying into and through a potential conflict zone. The absence of insurance cover in case of war also makes our situation that much more problematic.

Upon initially hearing Bob, the six of us ready for the tour (Bruce Day, Tom Evans, Andrew Getter, Tim Murphy, Ross Sherman, and Dave Shumaker) agreed to delay again. Aussie Bob targeted his next date for September/ October 2023. However, some of us were around eighty years old. We worried such a delay was a risk,

On 4/28/22 at 21:54, Tim wrote

I would love to stay on course for this outing. Bob has put a tremendous amount of effort into making this adventure happen. Let's not waste all his work. Next year sounds like a good plan for those who want to go next year. Let's stay on track and leave on the 21st. If we were to go into a full-scale nuclear exchange with Russia there might as well not be next year! What do you guys think?

On 4/28/22 at 22:29, Tom wrote:

*What do you think about Tim's suggestions? After my last year of experience, I no longer plan for a future a year and a half away. Health and life are changing too fast. If life treats us well, we can do **Ride to DTI** in 2023*

On 4/29/22 at 04:32, Ross wrote:

Bruce: I hated that Bob had to cancel the ride. I don't know if you have considered a plan to make a ride happen. If you do then I along with my van will still be available.

Lorene got me up last night so I could see Bob's email. I got up early to start the 12-hour drive to the Virginia mountains but will be back next week. My travel trailer is up there and I needed to go get it and bring it home. Just wanted to let you know I was still available.

With May 21st being less than a month, we had everything planned. We decided to do Aussie's Bob H2O as he planned. Except, we had a problem. None of us had yet studied in sufficient delay to manage all the extensive detail Bob had put together. He had all the roads identified. He had prepared RideWithGPS routes, edited cue sheets, reserved motels with his credit cards for five rooms, and selected daily SAG stops and lunch sectors with map coordinates.

Without Bob, we had to educate ourselves quickly. Fortunately, he documented everything. We just had to revise a few tasks. The biggest issue was reserving the motels with our credit card guarantees. When possible, we stayed with Bob's choice, but some were not available. That meant route changes.

GENERAL PLANS

We kept it as nearly as possible as Bob's H2O organization and filled in a few of the gaps. Tom volunteered to take the lead from Bob. He had been studying Bob's preparation as he finalized his schedules. He was the easiest to stay with Bob's layout. Bruce and Tom shared reservation tasks for the motel rooms. For convenience, we reserved nearly all our motels for either **Choice** (Tom's membership) or **Wyndham** (Bruce's membership). That simplified moving schedules and getting discounts. Bruce revised Bob's route maps and revised some of the map coordinates for Ross's van's GPS. Bruce drafted the [Crazy Guy on a Bike](#) that Bob had set up with daily journal entries and was the primary photographer.



The SAG stood for Safety and Gear. It was the vehicle that allowed this elderly team to do these tours. We loaded our luggage and hauled it along the route. In case of trouble or on special side trips, we carted the bike. Each bicyclist took his turn to ride SAG for ten to fifteen miles. In case of injury, illness, or laziness, one or more people could ride along with the SAG driver.

Ross owned the largest of our SAG vehicles. For the H2O trip, his nine-year-old van could carry eight bikes as shown to the left.

Bob had scheduled fourteen bike riding days, approximately 45 to 60 miles in length, and three rest days. The tour started from Gallatin (next to Hendersonville) on May 21st to Savannah (next to the ocean) on June 7th. Each riding day was divided into three or four segments: two approximate ten to fifteen miles SAG segments, a lunch SAG stop, and one long ride with maybe a late SAG to the motel. Each bicyclist took turns driving for a SAG segment and Ross drove after lunch to the lunch.

Before our departure, we made the following changes:

- One Rest Day at Smyrna GA (Bob had three)
- Identified a potential restaurant daily lunch stops
- Identified who had responsibility for each SAG
- Revised a few motels that were no longer available on Bob's list
- Picked motel roomies: one room for Tim, one rolling room for Andrew, and shared rooms for Bruce/Dave and Ross/Tom

During the tour, we also changed two routes:

- Centre to Cedartown, and
- Smyrna to Lithonia

On Centre to Cedartown, Bruce recommended we load the bikes on the van and drive south toward Weaver to ride the [Chief Ladiga](#) greenway trail. Several of us had not ridden on Chief Ladiga and that option was better than our roads for that day.

Smyrna to Lithonia was a problem. Atlanta traffic was horrible and Smyrna's **Extended Stay America** screwed up our reservations. Even with the written confirmation we had with us, they claimed another person had our room confirmation and the other room type did not exist. We canceled on the spot, loaded the bikes, drove to Lithonia, and found a **Super 8** motel for a two-night stay.

Relocating to Lithonia (from northwest of Atlanta to southeast) removed one ride day from our schedule. Bruce and Dave suggested that we shift our schedule up by one day. They canceled our other Lithonia motel and moved up by one day each of the five remaining motels. Likewise, our return day to Hendersonville shifted from June 5th to June 4th.

BICYCLES

Ross (83 y-o) rode his **Trek Dual Sport** eBike; Tom (78 y-o) rode his **Specialized VADO SL** eBike; Bruce (76 y-o), Dave (78 y-o), and Tim (71 y-o) rode conventional road bikes, and Andrew (57 y-o) rode his mountain bike. For most of the routes, all the bicyclists rode together. However, the eBikers had considerably less trouble on the hilly sections.

The significant variance was the 800-foot climb on TN-16 south of Winchester. Tom's ebike rose easily up the distance in Sport mode. Bruce and Andrew rose in "walk" mode and Tim made it in "creep" mode. Dave and Ross chose the "observation" mode from the peak.

With the cumulative three thousand miles, we had only four flats: Tom had two due to road debris and Bruce had two manipulating his inner tube.

Our near octogenarians had no injuries. However, all the conventional bicyclists had their tired moments and sore legs. Yes, the ebikes made a huge difference.

WEATHER

The first three days and last three days were hot with temperatures forecasted around the lower nineties. We had one rainy day. The other days were comfortable in the upper seventies.

When the forecasted days were hot, the group started the ride around 7 AM and finished around 1 PM. We were fortunate that all the motels let us into our rooms around 1 PM.

On two of the hot days, the weather was foggy. That kept morning cool in the lower seventies but made traffic somewhat dangerous. The fog would break out around 10:30 and the heat quickly rose.

ROAD CONDITIONS

About sixty miles were on State routes. They were almost the most dangerous with four- to six-foot wide shoulders and rumble strips. They always had semi-truck traveling around sixty mph. Nearly all of them as well as the cars were courteous and pulled away to the left. Nevertheless, those sections were always nerve-racking and hilly.

When we were on the thirty or forty miles of expressways, the shoulders were twelve or wider and had rumble strips that kept motor traffic far from the bikes. They were safe but boringly flat.

We did about a hundred miles on paved greenway trails in [Stones River Trail](#), [Chief Ladiga](#), and the [Silver Comet](#).

Bob put us on three miles of gravel road with nickel-size stones. They were safe but unpleasant.

The most dangerous were the ten miles from the **Silver Comet** to the **Extended** motel in Smyrna. Most of us chose the sidewalk. With driveway cuts and bumps, they were the least pleasant but kept us away from hurried-up Atlanta drivers that had little care for bicyclists. We unanimously decided never, ever bike on Atlanta roads.

The rest of the roads were country or city roads. We had to blend with auto traffic driving around forty-five mph. Generally, they were courteous and avoided us.

NAVIGATION

Each bicyclist had a navigation device. Dave was the most accurate using his **Wahoo**. Andrew also did well using his cellphone installed on **RideWithGPS**. Bruce and Ross used an old-style **Garmin eTrex**. Tim used a **Wahoo**. Tom used both the **Garmin Edge 530** and **RideWithGPS**.

Both Tim and Tom got lost with their devices in Tullahoma. Tim ended up with 65 miles on a 41-mile route. He had to restart from the start point. Tom ended up about 35 miles when his Garmin re-calculated him off-route and directly to Winchester.

Whatever Tim's problem was in Tullahoma, he fixed it and had no further issues. Tom continued to have issues with his Garmin throughout the tour and never trusted it. He added his cellphone **RideWithGPS** (same as Andrew) with its offline maps and audio instructions.

LIST OF CHARACTERS



Bob Schofield is the author and planner for the H2O. He started detailing his tour on the ***Crazy Guy on a Bike*** in December 2017, but based on the [magazine article that Tom Evans](#) submitted in September 2017, he was crafting his idea much earlier.

According to that article, Bob had already documented thirteen journals. This Australian has visited all fifty of the United States and trekked over ten thousand miles in those states on his bike and he is formulating plans.



At 83 years young, Ross Sherman was our eldest pedaler. He started riding in 1995 and met Bob and Bruce in 2002 while riding a tour across Alabama. He rode a “Bob Tour” eight times.

He graduated from MSU with, BS in Forestry and retired from the State of Mississippi Forestry (in 1991) after 31 years. He also retired after 29 years as Army Reserve Lt. Colonel. To keep active, he walked the entire Appalachian Trail.

A triple bypass heart surgery in 2009 doesn't slow him for a moment. He bought his ebike three years ago to keep ahead of the rest of us.

Tom Evans and Dave Shumaker are both 78 years young. In the last year, both have spent too much time in the hospital but they are working to keep well ahead of their doctors.



Tom with ebike



Dave with a conventional bike

Bruce Day and Tim Murphy are 76 and 71 years young, respectively.
They remain the most healthy of the elderly group.



Bruce with a conventional bike



Tim with a conventional bike

Andrew is around 57 years young. We just don't remember those ages.



Andrew on a mountain bike

REFERENCES:

- Crazy Guy on a Bike: <http://bicycledlife.topicwise.com/doc/H2O>
- H2O blog: <https://bobs-h2o.blogspot.com/>
- Chief Ladiga: <http://silvercometga.com/chief-ladiga-trail/index-ladiga.shtml>
- Stones River Trail:
https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1ZxIjFNRswYNFa_WEzcsivRsHSXGdyv&ll=35.83794166530129%2C-86.43333799131872&z=13
- Silver Comet: <https://www.silvercometga.com/>
- Magazine article:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dQU8jTd2gPjgPVeZKbUeNDwD7bTmxND/view>

THE PLAN

Plan with great detail; execute with great flexibility

Taking a half dozen people on a two-week tour half across the country takes planning - lots of planning and organization. Several members of our bike club had been doing so for as long as two decades. Bob was one of our first leaders and was attributed to the above guidance. It was even more critical when that person lived in Brisbane Australia and directed his team across eastern the USA or Great Britain. His 2019 bike tour was nearly his tenth successful time. Following a working technique was our approach. He did other tours every couple of years. (check out <http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/aussiebob>)

Bob initiated his **H2O** bike ride or **H**endersonville **2** the **O**cean in late 2016. By 2018, he outlined his ideas in a journal on his [Crazy Guy on a Bike](#). That gave him an Internet platform to advertise and test his plan. This free and independent website was developed and run by [Neil Gunton](#). It was supported solely by donations from bicycle tourists across the world. No ads! By 2022, this service had 15,627 journals and articles with 3,164,399 pictures.

Similar to Bob, since 1994, I have been broadcasting and sharing travel journals and videos for both bike and non-bike tours using [Google Blogger](#) and [Evanscenter](#) website. I know it was a BIG job.

Here was Bob's most likely technique for H2O.

- 1) Share the general travel concept. **Any other interested to join?**
 - a) What we want and how to tour: Region, period, who, lodging, and support.
 - b) Specific destinations, e.g. towns, routes, points of interest
- 2) Discuss the most likely routes. **Which specific roads and points of interest should we travel?**
 - a) Examine roads, traffic, shoulders, and recommendations from locals.
 - b) Draw the daily maps and collect using [Ride With GPS](#) for navigation devices
 - c) Detail preliminary cue lists and points of interest.
 - d) Document map coordinates for SAG support.
- 3) Verify the daily lodging. **Which motels (or uhg, camps) as destination points?**
 - a) Find safe inexpensive rooms that don't have bugs
 - b) Confirm room reservations with needed beds and the absence of smoking.
 - c) Example: For H2O, Bob reserved five rooms with his credit cards.
- 4) Clarify/confirm support travel. **What SAG and return travel was available?**
 - a) Can carry bikes/people during the ride
 - b) Return vehicles at the end of the tour.
- 5) Confirm participants, expenses, and dates. **Lock in the tour.**
 - a) Obtain good feedback BEFORE the tour.
 - b) Prepare SAG driver schedule
 - c) Prepare room schedules
 - d) Prepare/collect finances: [shared travel expenses](#), room costs.
 - e) Share documents: photos, journals, etc.
- 6) Document: H2O [CrazyGuyonaBike](#), [my blog](#), [my website](#).

That was the plan, but even before we jumped onto our bikes we had to **execute great flexibility**. In early May, Bob announced that he couldn't lead his tour. I agreed to step in for Bob. Bruce and I replaced all of Bob's credit card reservations for the motels, and [Bruce revised/verified GPS maps](#). About two days before we left, Andrew was uncomfortable because he had the high expense of a single room. The members of the group agreed to take turns sharing the single room.

While preparing the tour, we saved all our written documentation on our computers, just in case. We had all motel confirmations, [RideWithGPS files](#), and financial schedules on Google Drive. Later, Bruce reported daily journals on **Crazy Guy on a Bike** and took the [job as the photographer](#). Daily while riding, members got separated due to capabilities or due to different points of interest. Everyone had a navigation device and was tracked by [Life360](#) on their cell phone. Likewise, each SAG driver verified bicyclists at the changeover.

All our documentation enabled us to **execute flexibility** making improvements during the journey:

- Two Revised routes for bridge out: To Madison, To Dublin
- Replaced Centre Ride with Weaver Ride.
- Canceled Smyrna Extended Stay America
- Moved Smyrna with Rest Day to Lithonia Super 8 (van drive)
- Canceled Lithonia Motel on Evans Mill
- Moved motels forward one day: Madison, Milledgeville (new), Dublin, Vidalia, Hinesville, Garden City
- Revised bike route from Weaver to Cedartown
- Revised bike routes from Lithonia, Madison, and Milledgeville
- Revised bike route to Garden City
- Revised credit card payment schedule at motels

The tour meant everyone had the opportunity to take advantage of activities but were not committed to doing all actions if, when, and how. Almost daily, members were separated due to the pace, health and physical capabilities, different points of interest, weather, and road/traffic conditions. Each member **flexed** the tour as appropriate.

Most participants wished to include the non-biking spouse or children before, on, or after the tour. *Happy wife; happy life*. In H2O, we always assumed wives were invited to Savannah. It didn't work out.

SCHEDULES:

- Schedule 1: Route Map
- Schedule 2: Lodging Finance
- Schedule 3: Room Assignments (also motel confirmations not shown)
- Schedule 4: Sector Details
- Schedule 5: SAG Assignments
- Schedule 6: H2O Crazy Guy on a Bike

REFERENCES:

- Bob Schofield Bio: <http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/aussiebob>
- Crazy Guy on a Bike: <https://www.crazyguyonabike.com/>
- Neil Gunton: <https://www.crazyguyonabike.com/website/about/>
- Google Blogger: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogger_\(service\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogger_(service))
- EvansCenter: <https://www.evanscenter.com/>
- Ride With GPS: https://ridewithgps.com/collections/46994?privacy_code=FnLiVe8bkbWx2277
- Transport Expenses: <https://bobs-h2o.blogspot.com/p/transport.html>
- H2O CrazyGuyonaBike: <https://bicyclelife.topicwise.com/doc/H2O>
- My Blog: <https://bobs-h2o.blogspot.com/>
- My Website: https://www.evanscenter.com/bicycle_tours.html
- RWGPS Maps: https://ridewithgps.com/collections/46536?privacy_code=1Epfibfi2kRKJ2Sr
- Cues, FIT, GPS:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZVUwS2MLJQGIhhMggJC8qoe2zLiwZCJD>
- Life360: <https://www.life360.com/>
- Overall Plan: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H7sg4UVzkubTGOkVMkRYYosCRIELWLEA/view>
- ALL Photos: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-7wpUOfgSYkLnrmE5Y_T_JsbxyKwDYKq
- GPS Collection: <https://bobs-h2o.blogspot.com/p/gps.html>

SCHEDULE 1: Route Map

Route from Hendersonville (Gallatin) Tennessee to Savannah Georgia. The destinations are Murfreesboro TN, Manchester TN, Winchester TN, Scottsboro AL, Centre AL, alternate Weaver AL, Cedartown GA, Smyrna GA (Atlanta), Lithonia GA, Madison GA, Milledgeville GA, Dublin GA, Vidalia GA, Hinesville GA, Garden City GA (Savannah)



SCHEDULE 2: Lodging Finance

The four reserved rooms: one for Tim, one alternating with Andrew, and two shared rooms for Bruce/Dave and Ross/Tom. Scheduled CC payments to obtain nearly balanced costs.

LODGING FINANCE (REVISED)					PAY CREDIT CARDS AT MOTELS					
Arrival	Destination	Franchise	Price/ea	CC	Tim	Andrew	Bruce	Dave	Ross	Tom
Sat, May 21	Murfreesboro	Econolodge	\$103.38	TE	\$103.38	\$103.38			\$103.38	\$103.38
Sun, May22	Manchester	Econolodge	\$90.06	TE	\$90.06	\$90.06			\$90.06	\$90.06
Mon, May23	Winchester	Best Western	\$141.67	TE	\$141.67		\$141.67	\$141.67		\$141.67
Tue, May24	Scottsboro	Quality Inn	\$105.52	TE	\$105.52	\$105.52	\$105.52		\$105.52	
Wed, May25	Centre	Days Inn	\$115.50	BD	\$115.50			\$115.50	\$115.50	\$115.50
Thu, May26	Cedartown	Econolodge	\$110.43	TE	\$110.43	\$110.43		\$110.43	\$110.43	
Fri, May27	Lithonia	Super 8	\$817.96	TE	\$269.84	\$269.84	\$269.84			\$269.84
Sat, May28			\$477.38	TE						
Sun, May29	Madison	Days Inn	\$126.82	TE	\$126.82		\$126.82	\$126.82	\$126.81	
Mon, May30	Milledgeville	Days Inn	\$91.30	BD	\$91.30	\$91.30		\$91.30	\$91.30	
Tue, May31	Dublin	Days Inn	\$78.04	BD	\$78.04	\$78.04	\$78.04		\$78.04	
Wed, June1	Vidalia	Days Inn	\$92.54	BD	\$92.54		\$92.54	\$92.54		\$92.54
Thu, June2	Hinesville	Baymont	\$131.11	BD	\$131.11	\$131.11		\$131.11	\$131.11	
Fri, June3	Garden City	Econolodge	\$136.53	TE	\$136.53		\$136.53	\$136.53		\$136.53
					\$1,592.74	\$979.68	\$950.96	\$945.90	\$952.15	\$949.52
Reconciliation					Tim	Andrew	Bruce	Dave	Ross	Tom
Van Expense Paid to Ross					\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00		\$200.00
Payment already at Milledgeville - Pay to Bruce					\$91.30	\$91.30		\$91.30	\$91.30	
Payment to Tom - Charged to Tom's CC					\$103.38					
Balance Due						-\$24.04	\$4.68	\$9.74	\$3.49	\$6.12

Schedule 3: Room Assignments

Because we had one unpaired room, each of us (not Tim) took turns staying in the odd room. Below is the original room layout.

We also carried written confirmation for every motel. It was necessary for problems at Extended - Smyrna (which we canceled due to their failures); Microtel - Lithonia (which we canceled); Days Inn Madison, Milledgeville, Vidalia (which we moved up one day); Quality Inn - Dublin (which we changed to Days Inn); Baymont - Hinesville (which we moved up one day); Econolodge - Garden City (which we moved up one day).

LODGING ASSIGNMENTS				SINGLE/TRIPLE ROOM ASSIGNMENTS					
Arrival	Destination	Franchise	CC	Tim	Andrew	Bruce	Dave	Ross	Tom
Sat, May 21	Murfreesboro	Econolodge	TE	S	S	B	B	C	C
Sun, May22	Manchester	Econolodge	TE	S	B	S	B	C	C
Mon, May23	Winchester, TN	Best Western	TE	S	B	B	S	C	C
Tue, May24	Scottsboro, AL	Quality Inn	TE	S	C	B	B	S	C
Wed, May25	Centre	Days Inn	BD	S	C	B	B	C	S
Thu, May26	Cedartown, GA	Econolodge	TE	S	S	B	B	C	C
Fri, May27	Smyrna	Extended	TE	S	T	B	B	T	T
Sat, May28			TE	S	T	B	B	T	T
Sun, May29	Lithonia	Microtel	BD	S	C	B	B	S	C
Mon, May30	Madison	Days Inn	BD	S	C	B	B	C	S
Tue, May31	Milledgeville	Days Inn	BD	S	S	B	B	C	C
Wed, June1	Dublin	Quality Inn	TE	S	B	S	B	C	C
Thu, June2	Vidalia	Days Inn	BD	S	B	B	S	C	C
Fri, June3	Hinesville	Baymont	BD	S	C	B	B	S	C
Sat, June4	Garden City	Econolodge	TE	S	C	B	B	C	S
				Single room - S, Double room - B/C, Triple - T					

<p align="center">Day 01 SATURDAY</p>				<p align="center">Day 08 SUNDAY</p>			
START	Airport Road Publix		0 - A -	START	Extended - Smyrna		0 - O -
AM Regrouping/SAG	Dollar General	36.2924, -86.4442	10.2 - B -	AM Regrouping/SAG	Gas Station Dg. Floor Ave/Howell Mill	33.8004, -84.4164	10.1 - F -
Lunch/SAG change	<u>Gladeville Market & Grill</u>	36.1127, -86.4157	20.2 Ross	Lunch	<u>Kelly Mkt off E College/Trinity</u>	33.7718, -84.2924	20.2 Ross
RM Regrouping	Marathon Gas Station	35.9858, -86.3832	32.8 Ross	RM Regrouping	TO Stone Mt Fk/James B Mem Dr	33.8117, -84.1712	30.2 Ross
Destination	Murfreesboro: <u>Econolodge</u>	35.8491, -86.4318	42.2	Destination	Lithonia <u>Microtel</u>	33.7004, -84.1156	45.1
<p align="center">Day 02 SUNDAY</p>				<p align="center">Day 09 MONDAY</p>			
START	Econolodge		0 - C -	START	Microtel		0 - Q -
AM Regrouping/SAG	Christiana DG store	35.72012, -86.3254	16.2 - D -	AM Regrouping	Conyers	33.6657, -84.0275	7.1 - R -
Lunch	<u>Beech Grove store</u>	35.6246, -86.2481	26.2 Ross	Lunch	<u>Town House Cafe</u>	33.5961, -83.8604	19.2 Ross
RM Regrouping	Busy Corner Truck Stop	35.53840, -86.1658	36.2 Ross	RM Regrouping	Rutledge	33.6271, -83.6121	34.9 Ross
Destination	Manchester: <u>Econolodge</u>	35.48190, -86.0596	42.9	Destination	Madison: <u>Days Inn</u>	33.5868, -83.4767	45.9
<p align="center">Day 03 MONDAY</p>				<p align="center">Day 10 TUESDAY</p>			
START	Econolodge		0 - E -	START	Days Inn		0 - S -
AM Regrouping/SAG	Mapco, Tullahoma	35.3652, -86.2055	11.4 - F -	AM Regrouping	Union Chapel	33.4276, -83.4038	12.0 - T -
Lunch	<u>Tiss. Ford Marina</u>	35.2246, -86.2438	28.1 Ross	Lunch	<u>El Casador Mexican</u>	33.32601, -83.3882	23.6 Ross
RM Regrouping	Broadview Grocery @ Lynchburg Rd	35.1856, -86.1992	30.9 Ross	RM Regrouping	Gas station. Jet Food Store	33.1548, -83.3483	40.2 Ross
Destination	Winchester: <u>Best Western Inn</u>	35.2016, -86.0966	41.	Destination	Milledgeville: <u>Days Inn</u>	33.11471, -83.2600	47.6
<p align="center">Day 04 TUESDAY</p>				<p align="center">Day 11 WEDNESDAY</p>			
START	(SHORT) <u>Top of the climb - Meet SHORT & LONG</u>		0 - G -	START	Days Inn		0 - U -
AM Regrouping/SAG	Walls of Jericho Pkg Loc	34.9014, -86.0873	13.1 - H -	AM Regrouping	@ int. Mann-Wheeler Rd	32.9451, -83.1625	13.9 - V -
Lunch	<u>Skylark Cafe</u>	34.8020, -86.1210	26.2 Ross	Convenience Store	<u>Toombsboro Crossroads</u>	32.8215, -83.0786	27.3 Ross
RM Regrouping	Pikeville Store & Grill	34.7440, -86.0387	34.5 Ross	RM Regrouping	@ United Church	32.6536, -82.9852	41.3 Ross
Destination	Scottsboro AL: <u>Quality Inn</u>	34.6623, -86.0127	41.0	Destination	Dublin: <u>Quality Inn</u>	32.5479, -82.8737	54.4
<p align="center">Day 05 WEDNESDAY</p>				<p align="center">Day 12 THURSDAY</p>			
START	(SHORT) <u>Triple T Farm and Tackle on 35</u>		0 - I -	START	Quality Inn		0 - W -
AM Regrouping	SHORT & LONG @ Greens Chapel Church	34.4619, -85.9733	10.2 - J -	AM Regrouping	Haden Grocery	32.4749, -82.7351	9.8 - X -
Convenience Store	<u>Four Way Food Mart</u>	34.3622, -85.9357	18.5 Ross	AM2 Regrouping	Jim Bob's	32.2825, -82.5940	22.3 - Y -
RM Regrouping	Collinsville Piggly Willy & DG	34.2565, -85.8661	29.4 Ross	Lunch	<u>La Cabana</u>	32.3776, -82.5922	33.1 Ross
Destination	Centre: <u>Days Inn</u>	34.1884, -85.7012	43.0	Destination	Vidalia: <u>Days Inn</u>	32.2107, -82.3991	46.7
<p align="center">Day 06 THURSDAY</p>				<p align="center">Day 13 FRIDAY</p>			
START	Days Inn		0 - K -	START	Days Inn		0 - Z -
AM Regrouping/SAG	Johns @ Tucker Crossroads	34.1354, -85.8720	8.3 - L -	AM Regrouping	@ Hammonds Church Rd	32.1504, -82.2638	9.4 - 1 -
Lunch Options	<u>Local Joes BBQ Cave Springs</u>	34.1079, -85.3387	23.6 Ross	Lunch	<u>Dairy Queen Grill & Chill</u>	32.0869, -82.1180	19.5 Ross
Destination	Cedartown: <u>Econolodge</u>	34.0087, -85.0398	33.0	RM Regrouping	Mc Donalds Restaurant	31.9367, -81.9289	35.2 Ross
<p align="center">Day 07 FRIDAY</p>				<p align="center">Day 14 SATURDAY</p>			
START	Econolodge		0 - M -	START	Baymont		0 - 2 -
AM Regrouping/SAG	Dairy Queen Rockmart		16.8 - N -	AM Regrouping	Greyhound Bus Stop	31.9246, -81.3349	13.5 - 3 -
Lunch/SAG change	<u>Wendy's Building extension</u>	33.9075, -84.8249	34.1 Ross	Lunch	<u>Molly McPherson</u>	31.9246, -81.3349	21.8 Ross
RM Regrouping	Carter Road over Silver Comet		45.0 Ross	RM Regrouping	Reece BarBQ	31.9979, -81.2561	28.1 Ross
Destination	Smyrna: <u>Extended</u>	33.8835, -84.4791	57.0	Destination	Garden City <u>Econolodge</u>		39.5

SAG SELECTIONS			
RM= Route Miles, SM = SAG Miles			
	Route	RM	Assignment SM
A	Gallation to		D Bruce 10
B	Murfreesboro	45	E Tom 10
C	Murfreesboro to		G Andrew 16
D	Manchester	43	M Tim 10
E	Manchester to		S Dave 11
F	Winchester	41	D Bruce 17
G	Winchester to		E Tom 13
H	Scottsboro	48	G Andrew 13
I	Scottsboro to		M Tim 10
J	Centre	43	S Dave 8
K	Chief Ladiga to		D Bruce 19
L	Cedartown	45	E Tom 14
M	Cedartown to		G Andrew 17
N	Smyrna	57	M Tim 17
Although sked from Lithonia and not Smyrna, original SAG assignments retained			
Q	Lithonia to		E Tom 11
R	Madison	50	G Andrew 12
S	Madison to		M Tim 12
T	Milledgeville	48	S Dave 11
U	Milledgeville to		D Bruce 14
V	Dublin	54	E Tom 13
W			G Andrew 10
X	Dublin to Vidalia		M Tim 12
Y			S Dave 11
Z	Vidalia to		D Bruce 9
1	Hinesville	60	E Tom 10
2	Hinesville to		G Andrew 13
3	Garden City	50	M Tim 8
EXTRA			S Dave

Schedule 4: Sector Details

ABOVE simulates Bob's **Sector Schedule** with SAGs and motels. I had to revise some motels that were no longer available. I also selected lunch restaurants. The schedule below shows our original plan with Smyrna. After our revised Lithonia, the daily sector schedules continued.

Schedule 5: SAG Assignments

Each bicyclist took turns driving the SAG vehicle in the morning. After lunch, Ross drove the SAG. Typically, we had two ten-mile (approximate) sections in the morning.

Schedule 6: H2O Crazy Guy on a Bike

H2O was featured on ***Crazy Guy on a Bike***. Bob prepared and wrapped the original plan, Bruce documented the journal and included some of the 325 photos that he took, and Tom added the “pulls everything together again” and “Final Reconciliation.”

Hendersonville to the Ocean (H2O)

A tour from Hendersonville, Tennessee to Savannah, Georgia

Copyright © 2018-2022 By [Bob Schofield](#), [Bruce Day](#) ★ and [Tom Evans](#) ✉

Completed Jun 2022

14 days from May 21, 2022 to June 3, 2022

Updated: Wednesday June 8, 2022 06:33 (US/Pacific) (edited Fri 10 Jun 2022 15:20 (US/Pacific))

[154 pics](#)

4,161 hits since February 19, 2018 (hitcounts updated nightly)

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Year: [2022](#)

Permalink: <http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doo/H2O>

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[1. Gallatin, TN to Murfreesboro 45 miles, 1,714'](#)

[2. Murfreesboro to Manchester: 42 miles 1,742'](#)

[3. Manchester to Winchester 41.2 miles 1,838](#)

[4. Winchester to Scottsboro, AL: 49 miles 2,414'](#): Those wanting to avoid climb 8 miles out of Winchester will start at top of climb.

[5. Scottsboro to Centre 43 miles 1,986'](#); or, purist's less-trafficked option, EFI: 59 miles 2,905'

[6. Centre to Cedartown, GA 38 mi, 1,430'](#): Could not get lodging at Rockmart

[7. Cedartown to Smyrna 57 miles](#): On the Silver Comet, Concord Road and Mountain to River Trails

Rest Day : *Loaf, Laundry, Clean Bike, Loaf*

Rest day: bypass downtown Atlanta completely

[8. Lithonia to Madison 45 miles 1,827'](#): A ride through Atlanta's outer urban fringe. Finale on SBR35

[9. Madison to Milledgeville 48 miles 2,061'](#): The Antebellum Trail: Eatonton and Milledgeville

[10. Milledgeville to Dublin 55.4 miles 2,539'](#): Most changed route due to motel change

[11. Dublin to Vidalia 42 miles, 1,246'](#): Part on SBR 40

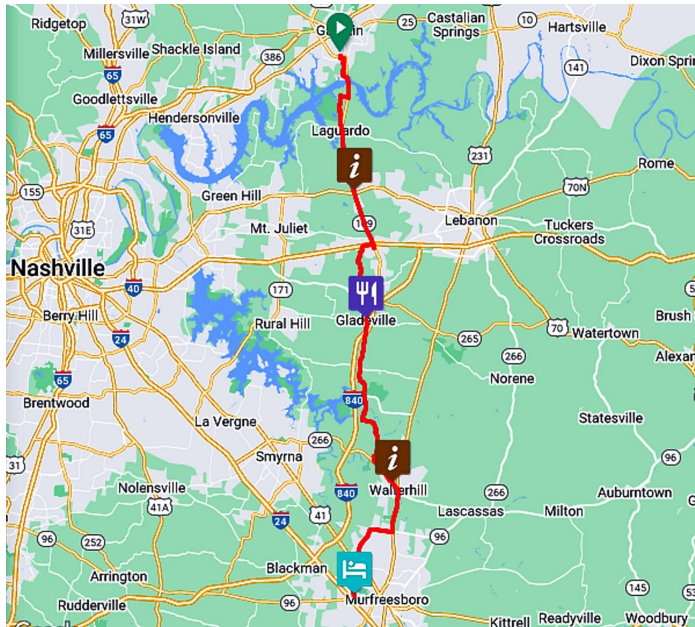
[12. Vidalia to Hinesville 58 miles; 800'](#)

[13. Hinesville to Savannah: 44 miles; 364'](#): into Savannah on SBR 95/East Coast Greenway

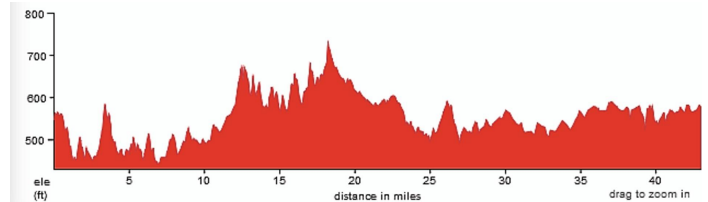
[Home Safe](#)

Show links to this

May 21 Sat - Gallatin to Murfreesboro



Route was **43 miles** from Gallatin Publix lot to Murfreesboro Econolodge. The elevation change



was **1657 feet** with the first half as hot and hilly. About 8 miles was on rumbled state roads with the balance on county and rural roads.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39508981>

By May 2022, Aussie Bob was ready to start one of his regular visits from Brisbane Australia to the southeast United States. COVID had delayed his annual multi-week bike tour for over two years. His usual entourage of over a half-dozen bicyclists was enthused for one of his adventures.

He was starting his tour from Hendersonville Tennessee. That was the home base of the FOGBEES bike club where he could always find some of its members anxious to join him. For two or three weeks, he chose to pedal some place for approximately 700 miles. This time, he was leading a half-dozen bicyclists on his H2O route from Hendersonville to Savannah. Well, that was the original schedule.

Originally, Bob scheduled his tour for October 2020. Then in May 2020, COVID quarantined him in Australia. He rescheduled to May 2021, then to October 2021, and finally to May 2022 when Australia opened up to COVID. But, Putin put the kibosh on Bob's around-the-world airline trip through Finland. He again rescheduled to October 2023.

However, this new delay got the H2O bicyclists too anxious. Several of us were around eighty years old. Too much time would pass and too many were having health issues. May 2022 might be our last big bike ride. It had to happen now. Bob had a great detailed plan. It was a shame to waste it. At 10 AM on May 21st, six of us were ready at Publix in Gallatin.

Our bikes were ready on the corner of TN 109 and S. Waters. Ross Sherman had driven his full-size van from Wiggins Mississippi as our SAG vehicle. It had comfortable space for eight passengers, their bicycles, and their baggage with one rack for four bikes in the back and another in the front.

In transit, Ross picked up Andrew Getter, Bruce Day, and me, Tom Evans, in Hendersonville. Tim Murphy and Dave Shumaker drove from White House and met the group. We were almost ready to go, but before we pedaled beyond our first few feet, we had our first change.

We detailed our route, doorstep to doorstep. We had maps, GPS, and Cue lists. We had SAG stops, lunch stops, and motels with map coordinates. Even though we left nothing to order in advance, we still made revisions on the spot: different motels, different routes, and bridges out. We reworked with laptop computers at the motels and manipulated internet cellphones while on the bikes. We used **Life360** maps to remain connected. Each of us traveled with personal navigation devices.

Our route from Publix ran from side roads to the new **TN 109** road and across the **Walter Durham** bridge. Two weeks earlier, I had ridden across the bridge and found it so full of glass and debris that I got a flat tire. Dave suggested we load the van and drive three miles to the other side. No one argued.



By the time we relocated across the bridge, checked our bikes, and took our photographs, we didn't get moving until around 11 AM.



The sun was getting hot. It was directly above us on the twelve-foot wide black asphalt shoulder. The temperature with its uncomfortable humidity was forecasted to be over 90 degrees.

The first four miles were treed on side roads. The next eight miles blasted on the black 109. The next twenty-eight miles on the county roads were hot and hilly. We weren't having fun.

It wasn't quite so bad to the two ebikers. I had the second SAG. While the others were enjoying the middle 90 degrees with humidity and fighting the hills, I roamed around Gladesville in the air-conditioned van looking for lunch at the Sub Shop. Ross paced near the front of the group for the first eighteen miles until he took SAG after lunch.

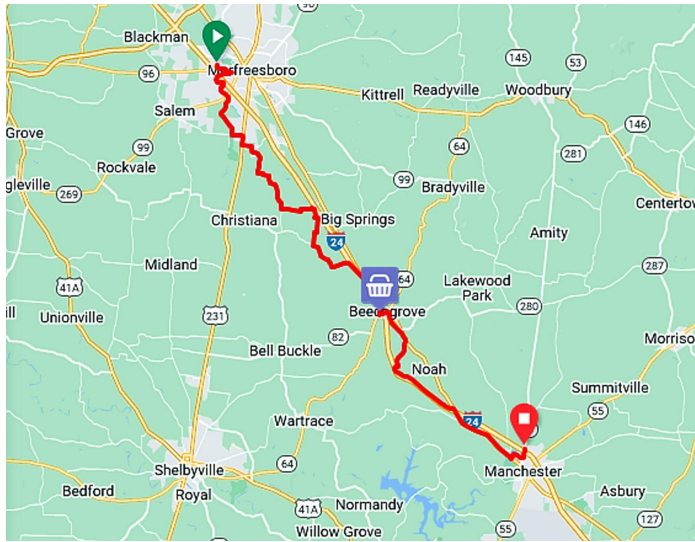


On the first day with SAGS, Bruce and I rode thirty miles. Tim and Andrew did the full forty miles. Dave took advantage of the SAG. With too much heat, he kept Ross company in the van.

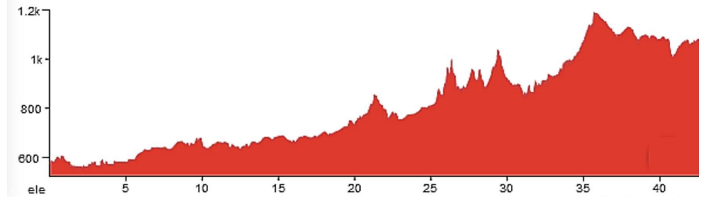
The consensus for the conventional bikers was that this day was the most uncomfortable – hot and hilly.

Everyone was pleased to arrive at our Econo-lodge in Murfreesboro. Ross met us with a cool brew as each collapsed at the motel.

May 22 Sun - Murfreesboro to Manchester



Route was **43 miles** from Murfreesboro Econolodge to Manchester Econolodge. The elevation



change was **1808 feet** with mostly climbing and minimal hills. About 5 miles was initially **on the greenway** with the balance on county and rural roads.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39306535>

Throughout the trip, the State roads had shoulders of four-foot to twelve-foot width, almost usually



with side rumble strips. We handled them but struggled with the narrow shoulders. Bicyclists loved rumble on wide shoulders. That kept auto traffic away from them. In Georgia, the roads also had a center rumble. Neither auto traffic nor bicyclists liked those with the blasted sound.

The State roads had light to moderate traffic with one vehicle per minute or in sight. They had hills but had the flattest.

We were on County roads most often. They had no shoulders or rumble strips. Traffic was light to moderate traffic. They often had steeper and more curvy hills.

Both the State and County roads had fast traffic averaging around sixty mph. However, everyone was courteous. They moved far to the left keeping a minimum of five feet separate from the bicyclist. Nevertheless, a semi-truck pulling a log trailer was scary and could pull a demonstrable draft.

We weren't ready to ride until around 9 AM. The breakfast at Econolodge was spartan. The temperature was in the upper sixties and the dark clouds threatened rain. We hoped to ride fast enough to stay ahead of it.

For the first five miles, we rode south of Murfreesboro on the **Stones River Greenway**.



Afterward, we were mostly on urban and rural roads with very little auto traffic. The clouds remained overcast keeping the temperature very pleasant in the lower seventies.

Everyone wanted to ride and not take their turns at SAGGING. They took as much pedaling time as possible to arrive at the first SAG swap. Tim and I arrived a half-hour before Bruce, Dave, and Ross. Andrew who got that first SAG was anxious. He wanted to ride. As soon as the last biker arrived, he left. I left him company. Tim tried unsuccessfully to solicit anyone to take his SAG turn.



I stayed with Andrew for about a half-hour until he was unable to keep up on the hilly sections. I took off on an I-24, four-mile access interstate road. Tim, who had the second SAG, was waiting for us for lunch at the Marathon, an isolated service mart in Beechgrove. At that point, we were about a half-hour apart. It was about to get greater.

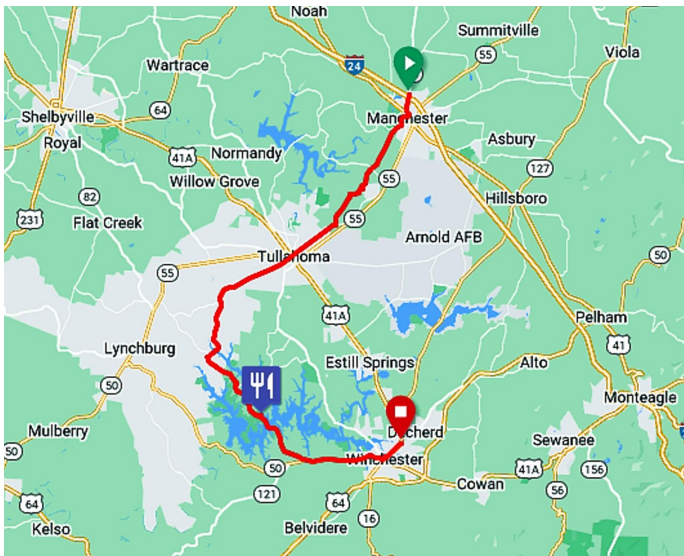
When Bruce, Dave, and Ross arrived at the Marathon, Andrew, Tim, and I took off. In about a half-mile Andrew took the wrong road. He was over the hill and I couldn't catch him. I returned to the correct road. Tim wasn't sure who to follow - Andrew or me. I assumed he followed Andrew, but unknown to me he returned to follow me.

I kept thinking that I should have told Tim, "Never to follow Andrew."

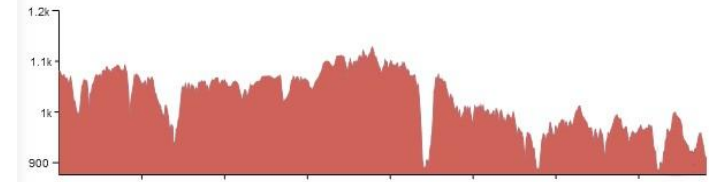
But, I didn't go after Tim. He would do fine. I had followed Andrew before. Right or wrong, Andrew always found his way. He did it again.

A light rain drizzled by the time each of us reached the Econolodge in Manchester.

May 23 Mon - Manchester to Winchester



Route was **39 miles** from Manchester Econo-lodge to Winchester Best Western. The elevation



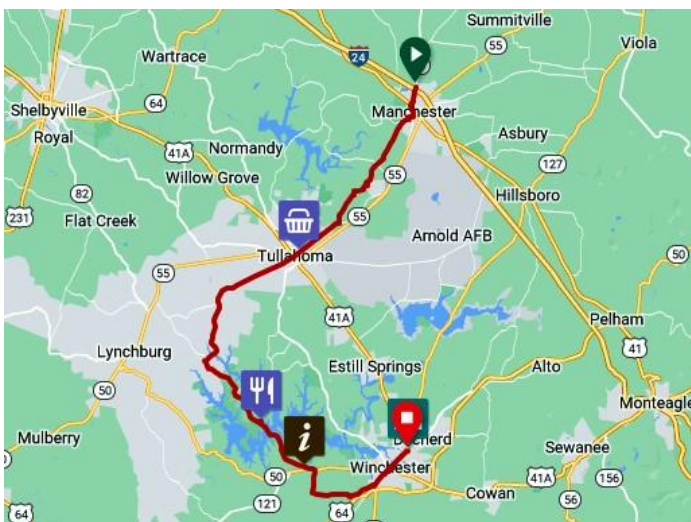
change was **1764 feet** with relatively level in first half and some challenging hills in the second half. The route was on county and rural roads.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39306542>

This was not a good day for Tim and me. We both got lost near Tullahoma after leaving Manchester.

The day started well with us having a great breakfast at the next-door Cracker Barrel, but everyone started riding differently. I had been having trouble with my Garmin Edge 530 and depended on following either Bruce or Dave. Dave was the first SAG and Bruce and Ross started ahead of the rest of us around 10 AM about a half-hour before me. I thought I could catch them. Neither Tim nor I did and the separate start became a mess for both of us.

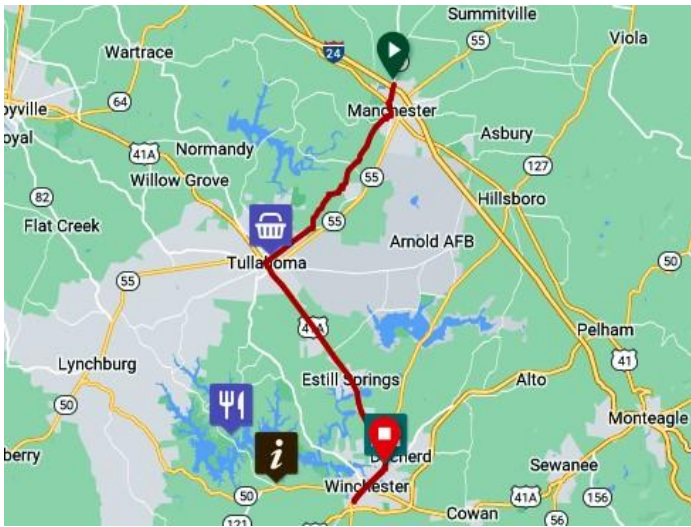
I examined my RideWithGPS before I left the motel. The route to Tullahoma was a “straight shot.” I thought if I pushed my ebike, I could catch Bruce and Ross before Tullahoma and follow them to the first SAG with Dave. I didn’t.



I did not pass Bruce or Ross as I passed through Tullahoma. Something was wrong.

I remembered the SAG stop being at a major street corner in Tullahoma. I had met no one. My Garmin wanted me to turn through Tullahoma while my RideWithGPS had me on a straight course.

I called Bruce. He, Ross, and Dave were about five miles away from me and away from where the Garmin wanted me to go.



Bruce and I discussed my location and decided that my Garmin was taking me on a direct and shorter route to Winchester and not on the H2O route. We agreed that I should continue with Garmin.

As I approached Winchester, the rain started and I pushed faster. The road alongside the motel was under construction and I buzzed right past the motel. The Garmin set up a new direction - this time on the other route across Winchester and backwards on the H2O route to Manchester.

When I got past Winchester, I knew I was really lost. To make matters worse, I had a flat. I went to a nearby gravel driveway and I flipped the bike upside down to remove the rear wheel. In the process, I damaged the ebike's Terminal Control Display.

I repaired the flat and examined RWGPS on my cell phone. It showed the motel back across the other side of Winchester. I started following the cell phone, stopping every couple of minutes to confirm my location.

In maximum frustration while following the cell phone in my hand, I was nearly hit by several cars as they blasted loud horns. I found the motel with no more trouble. At 1:30, I gradually recovered my nerves and waited for Ross in the van.

We weren't aware of Tim's Wahoo trouble until he didn't arrive around 3 o'clock with everyone else.



We tried to locate him. We couldn't see him on Life360 and he wasn't answering his phone.

Apparently, he also got lost near Tullahoma and decided to ride back to Manchester to reset his Wahoo onto the right course.

Around 3:30, he sent us a text message saying, **"Don't worry. I have a plan but I will be late."**

He arrived at the motel at 5 PM. He did about 65 miles alone on a 43-mile route.

Dinner that night was in a Greek/Italian restaurant.

Tim never explained his problem, but he said that he never had a problem with his Wahoo for the remainder of the trip. I continued to have trouble with the Garmin which I never resolved.

The **Garmin Edge 530** worked perfectly from Gallatin and Murfreesboro. I didn't expect issues from Manchester. I continued to have good days and failures throughout the trip. I switched over to using **RideWithGPS** on my cell phone. From what I could see, Andrew was using **RideWithGPS** and having success most of the time. But unlike the Garmin, **RideWithGPS** wasn't sending surprises.

Before the tour, I had subscribed to **RideWithGPS** so I could download maps and receive voice direction. It did both well. It was just hard following my cell phone in my jersey's back pocket.

After returning home, I spent an hour "chatting" with the Garmin "technicians." The online operator could not explain what I was seeing.

He would type, *"I haven't heard of that one. I will have to ask the experts."*

He also gave me incorrect recommendations. He said, *"We recommend the use of Edge with TCX."*

I have recorded our conversation and have reread it several times. **He was wrong!** The Garmin Edge will not accept **TCX**. It requires **FIT**. I was using **FIT** from **RideWithGPS**.

Nevertheless, I have a theory.

First, Garmin uses the app **Garmin Connect**. One must use **TCX** for that app. . The app exports **FIT** file to the **Edge 530**. The **FIT** from the **Garmin Connect** was more than two and a half times the size from **RideWithGPS**. Frequently, as I used only **RideWithGPS**, the **Edge** complained that the file was incomplete. The Edge required the additional data from **Garmin Connect**.

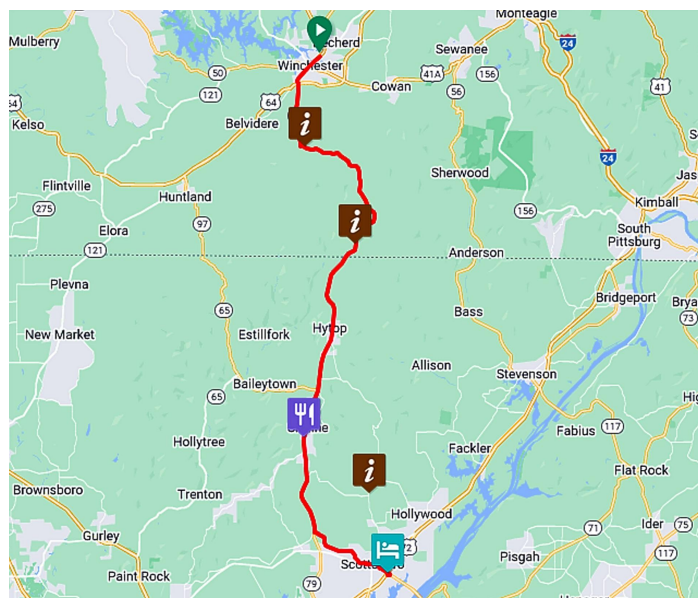
Second, I most likely didn't wait for the Garmin to lock in the satellites before I tried to activate a course map. I suspect while in Manchester, the **Edge** hadn't yet locked in the satellites and couldn't read the **RideWithGPS FIT**. When the **Edge** finally got the satellites near Tullahoma, it created the best course to Winchester and not the **FIT** that it couldn't decipher.

I am still trying to understand the **Edge**. Nobody has my problem and Garmin doesn't have answers.

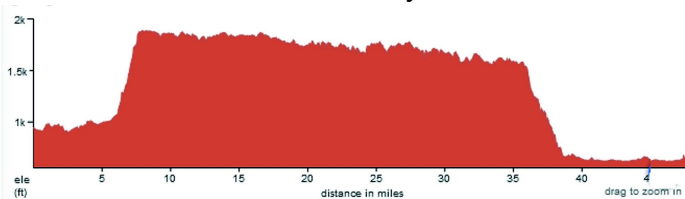
Reference:

Garmin Connect: <https://connect.garmin.com/>

May 24 Tue - Winchester to Scottsboro



Route was **48 miles** from Winchester Best Western to Scottsboro Quality Inn. The elevation

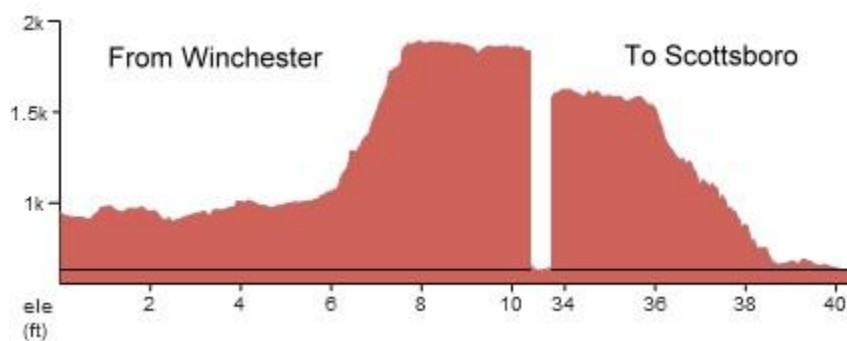


change was **2421 feet** with a 800-ft rise in the first 9 miles and 800-ft descent about 37 miles. The route was on state roads for 40 miles and on county and rural roads on the over. Two optional routes modified these high elevation changes.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39446099>

Today was our first big challenge - the Cumberland Plateau. The ride out of Winchester had a climb from 1063 feet to 1876 feet for slightly less than 2 miles. When Bob initially laid out his route, he figured we wouldn't want to ride the climb. He planned the van carrying everyone up to the top.

On the downside, the road dropped from 1583 feet to 661 feet in less than 3 miles. Bruce called it a "screaming" down. He redirected us onto a side road. Those were the maps; we did them differently.



In 2011, Bruce, Dave Irvine, and I biked those ridges, fully loaded with panniers. Bruce, the goat, rode up the climb without hesitating. Dave and I stopped to rest three times, but we rode the whole thing. This time, I had an ebike. I expected to climb without resting. Would "the goat" be able to repeat?

Dave and Ross followed Bob's recommendation. They rode the van to the top of the ridge. They waited as photographers to watch the other four.

On his ***Crazy Guy on a Bike*** journal, Bruce said,

"Tom was anxious to have a go with his ebike. I was curious to see if I could still do it, having danced up it out of the saddle 5 (sic) years ago. Tom zipped up with no problem, Tim climbed it all on the bike with some pain, Bruce gave up about halfway and walked the rest. Andrew walked a good part of the climb but had enough left to remount and cycle the last 100 yards."

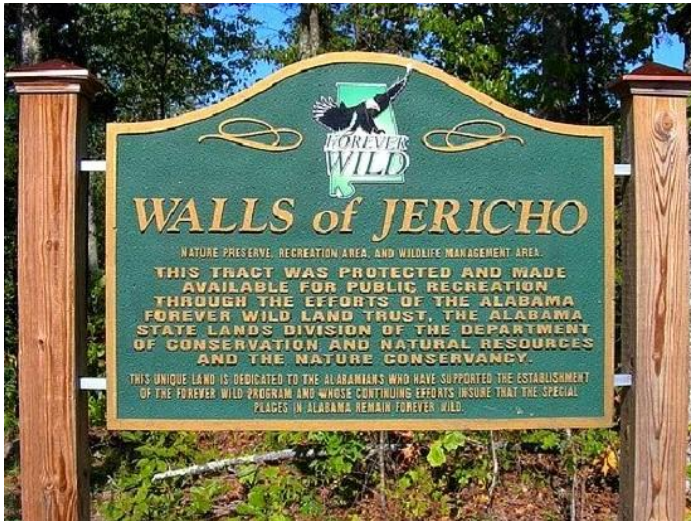
Tom and Tim ride the climb



Bruce is honest; Andrew tries to pretend.



After the top of the ridge, the first SAG stop was at the **Walls of Jericho**. Dave and Ross missed seeing the BIG sign but chose the Alabama sign.



The town Skyline was on the downside. It marked the decline. We had two options: a road that Bruce called “screaming” and another more circuitous road which he and Bob assumed to be safer. Andrew didn’t follow instructions. He went down the “screaming.” Bruce, Dave, Tim, and I did the other.



Before our demise we had a chance for our final meal. Sam’s Diner was at the edge of the ridge. It was a “meat and three” type of restaurant with big offerings.

Andrew liked his option. He said, “*It wasn’t ‘screaming’.*”

Andrew did well and arrived at the motel about an hour before the others. In a typical Andrew manner, he rode on the wrong route but did the best route. The “preferred” section was a potted mess located in nowhere. On the steepest decline, the road was full of holes that we had to carefully dodge.



Tim rapidly handled down the rough section, but then his Wahoo lost an accurate route. Dave and I found him waiting for us on the level section. Again, I chose to follow Dave.

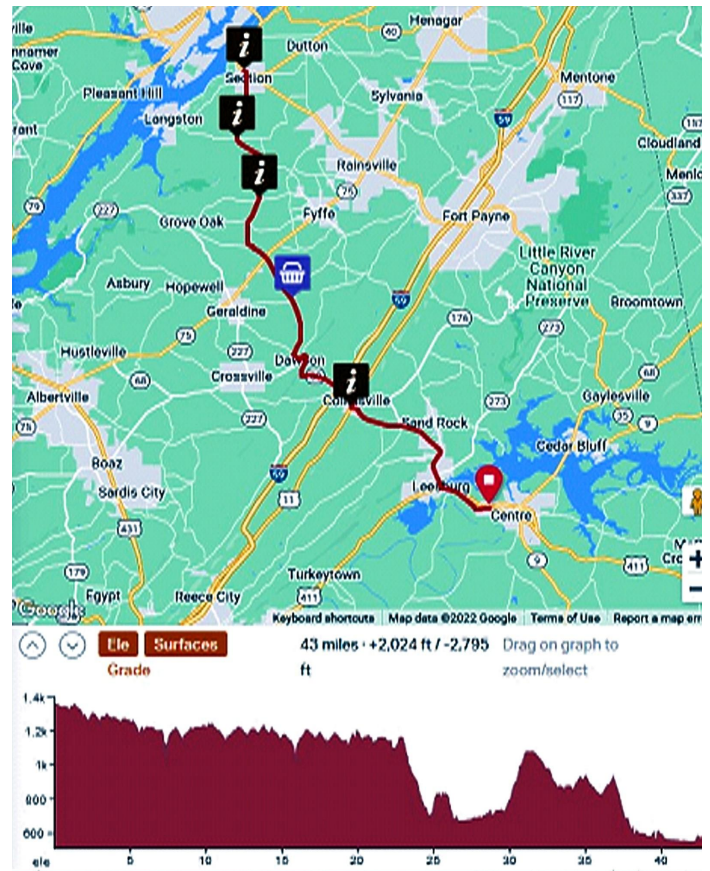
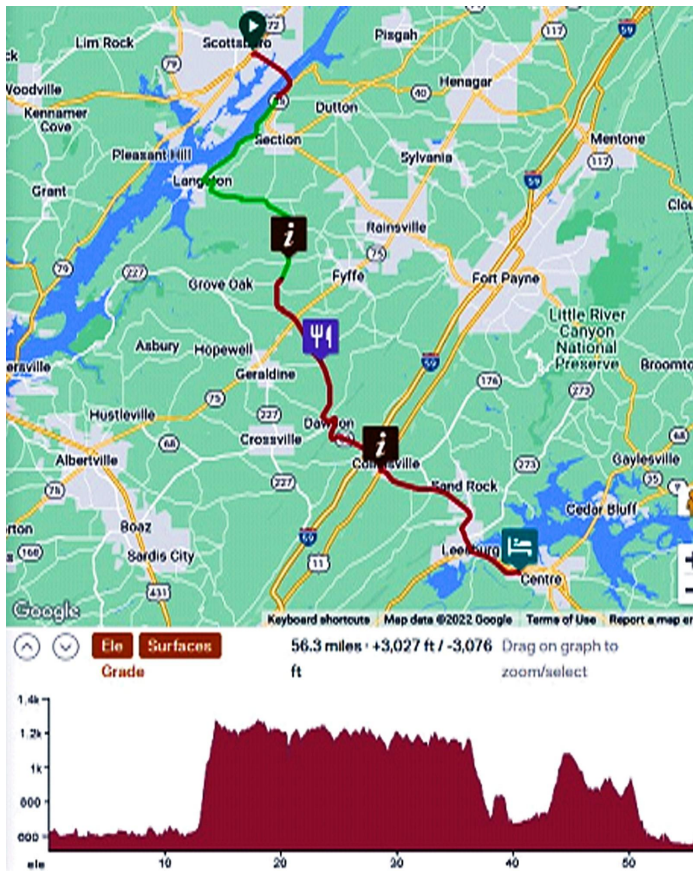
Bruce pedaled slowly alone behind us but had a blow-out. We could not contact him on the cell phone or **Life360**. After waiting fifteen minutes, Dave and I chose to continue. Tim stayed behind.

That evening we had dinner at the Ruby Tuesday next door.

May 25 Wed - Scottsboro to Centre

We might say that today was not our worst or most difficult day, but it was the only day that ended our ride.

We had two options: a **56-mile** route with a 700-foot climb and a **43-mile** route with a van ride to the top of the climb. Andrew, Bruce, and Tim chose the long route while Dave, Ross, and Tom selected the shorter route. The hill option had a scenic ride along the river.



Bruce described their ride.

That added 13 miles and a lot of climbing so we began at 7:30 to better match with the guys sagging to the top of the climb. Except for the river crossing where we had a vicious headwind, the first 10 miles were great. The smooth road ran along the Tennessee river with very little traffic. Once in Langston, we stopped at a local store to rest before the climb. It didn't help me. I walked about a third of the steepest lower section. Only Andrew stayed on his bike the entire way.



On the top of the hill, Ross and I battled a continuously repeated series of PUCs (painful uphill climb) and a twenty MPH wind at our face. Even with our ebikes we had to rest several times. Even worse, after my experience in Tullahoma, we were depending on my Garmin to lead us. That wasn't a guarantee and I was worried about one questionable turn.

When Ross and I met Dave at the first SAG stop, Ross was done for the day. Dave showed a squall line was rapidly approaching. We couldn't wait for the others. We thought we could outrun the thunderstorm. We were wrong.

We arrived quickly at the planned lunch stop. The darkening sky showed the thunderstorm rushing our way. We called Ross with the van. He said that the "river riders" still hadn't reached him. We told Ross that we were skipping lunch.

Look at the elevation map above at the 43-mile route. At mile 27, was where the road dropped and the sky laid a waterfall upon us. With the rain, I could barely see cars and semi-trucks barreling sixty miles down the decline. Certainly, they could not see me on the four-foot shoulder.

Then, when a loud blast of thunder from nearby lightning was too close, I pulled off the road. On the grassy berm, I put on my raincoat for whatever good it was going to do. I was already soaking wet. I had my instruments in plastic bags.

I waited for the rain to lessen before I considered getting back onto the highway. I saw a headlight moving rapidly and too close to me. I pulled further away from the road.

It wasn't another truck; it was Dave. Pedaling down the road as fast as he could in his bright yellow raincoat, he was stopping for neither a bike nor a truck. I jumped back onto the shoulder behind him.



As we climbed the road to the top of the ridge, we found an abandoned service station with a roof. We would wait for the rain to pass.

The weather report on our cell phones showed the rain was never going to quit that day. **We called Ross for help.**

Ross said that Andrew, Bruce, and Tim had not reached his SAG spot. They had taken shelter at a farmhouse. Unlike Dave and I, **they were dry.** Ross was going back up to pick them up and then go after us.

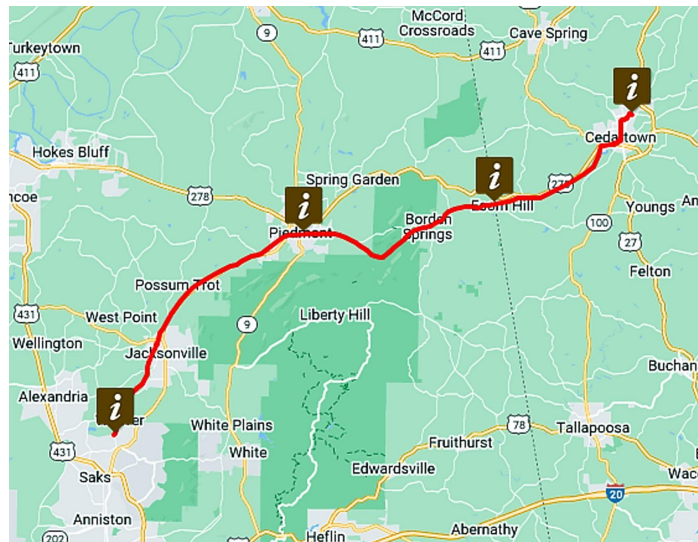
The bike ride was done for the day. Around noon, the Centre **Days Inn** let us into rooms. A warm dry feeling was welcoming. I had the single room for that evening. I raised the heater, put my wet clothes on a rope line across the vent, and took a long hot shower. We had an early dinner.

That evening we walked next door to the **Easy Street Cafe** for dinner. Later, we returned to its bar for a couple of beer glasses and enjoyed listening to a Country Music Duo.

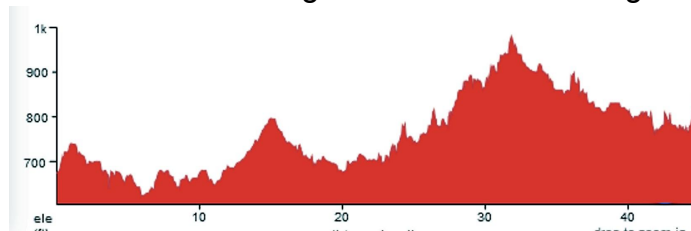


Around 9 o'clock, Dave was still hungry. He convinced us to walk across the expressway to a Pizza delivery shop. He bought a large pizza and we sat on benches outside in the stripmall eating his pie.

May 26 Thu - Centre to Cedartown



Route was **45 miles** from Centre Days Inn to Cedartown Econolodge. The elevation change



was **1204 feet**. We *vanned* almost to Weaver to ride the **Chief Ladiga** which connected after 33 miles to the **Silver Comet**. The route was on **greenway trails**.

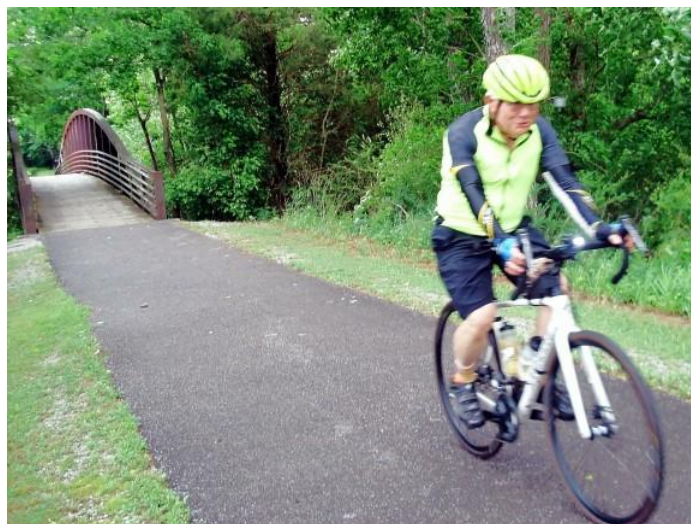
<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39562854>

The weather in the morning was not looking promising. The sky was heavily overcast. For sure, somewhere along our route we were going to get wet. Bruce was also not encouraging about the roads we had to ride. It was almost entirely on major roads most likely full of auto traffic.

Early in the morning, he proposed a better plan. Let's drive to Weaver, Alabama and ride the **Chief Ladiga**. Our weather maps looked like the rain might miss that region. Immediately, everyone thought it was a great idea. But, we never got to Weaver.

Near mile 17.5 along the **Chief Ladiga** trail at Parker Instrument Products, Bruce said, "Stop here."

The sun had peaked out for a moment and he didn't want to take a rain risk. Ross volunteered to carry the SAG duty for the entire route.



The **Chief Ladiga** was an eight-foot-wide asphalt surface. It had numerous root lumps, but other than that it was in good shape.



We pedaled fast to stay out of the rain until we reached its terminus with the **Silver Comet**. A little rain had started. Dave, Tim, and I determined we weren't going to get rain like yesterday. We loaded our bikes in the parking lot about a mile east from the Alabama border at **Esom Hill Trailhead**.

But rain or not, Bruce decided to ride to Cedartown. Andrew joined him. As we drove away, the rains got fairly high to Cedartown. We were happy with our decision.

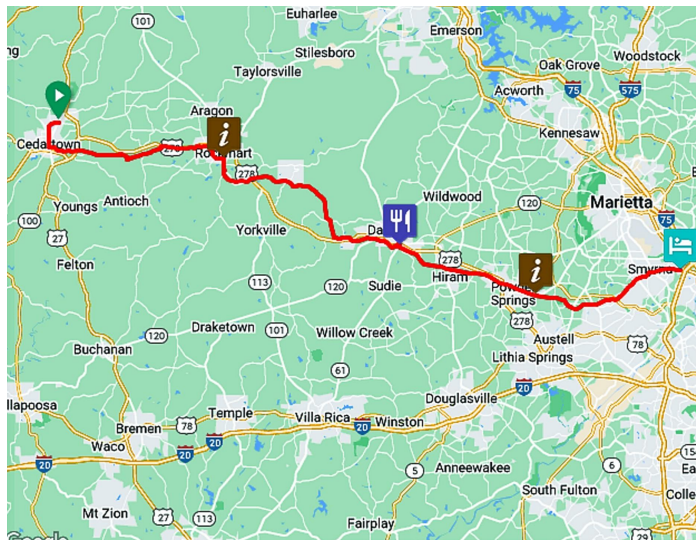
The desk lady at the Econolodge seemed angry at the world. She was not pleased when Dave asked if we could get into our rooms early. After some fussing with the official motel "CIA", she obliged.

Having ridden the van and stayed outside while the crew asked for our rooms, I don't know the issue. I suspect the problem was an absent person had booked the rooms. When I talked with her afterward, she was very pleasant.

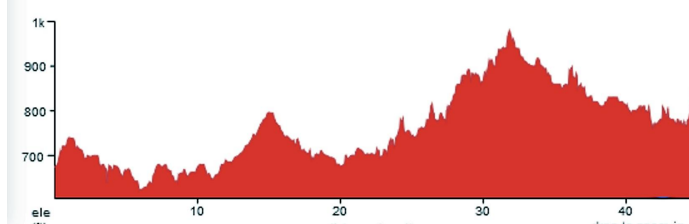
Nevertheless, all posted rules across the desk indicate they had lots of trouble with previous clientele. Or they were unusually paranoid.



May 27 Fri - Cedartown to Smyrna



Route was **57 miles** from Cedartown Econo-lodge to Smyrna America Extended. The elevation change



tion change was **2618 feet**. The first 47 was on the **Silver Comet**. The last 10 miles was on a **horrible Atlanta street**. This route was the **wrong ending section for the Comet**

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39561862>

We had our first beautiful day with a clear sky. The temperature was forecasted to be in the mid-seventies. Cedartown was directly on the trail. We were anxious to ride 57 miles on the **Silver Comet**. Our destination was in Smyrna, a city on the northwest border of Atlanta. Unfortunately, we had several problems: the Smyrna motel didn't have our rooms and Conrad Rd off the trail was not suitable for bicycles.

As a comparison, in May 2012, the FOGBEES had a three-day trip on the **Silver Comet**. It went well. For future reference, I am appending their experience to this chapter.

The **Silver Comet** was a 61-mile paved pedestrian rail-trail that started at Esom Hill, connected with **Chief Ladiga**, and ended in Smyrna, Georgia, 13 miles northwest of Atlanta. It had walkers, hikers, bicyclists, rollerbladers, and horses. Both the **Silver Comet** and **Chief Ladiga** were fully paved rail trails built on abandoned railroad lines, 94.5 miles from Anniston, Alabama to Smyrna, Georgia.

In 2013, The trail was estimated to have had 1.9 million uses with 400,000 from out of state. The direct spending of residents and tourists was \$57 million. The economic impact was \$118 million supporting 1,310 jobs.

The tax revenue generated by the trail was estimated to be about \$3.5 million in income tax, sales tax, and business taxes. Studies suggested a 4 to 7 percent increase in property taxes for homes within a quarter-mile of the trail, resulting in an increase of \$0.5 million in revenue for municipalities and school districts.

The **Silver Comet** was a trail in great shape. We found dozens of locations for Kodak moments. We just couldn't take snapshots at each one or we would have never got done before dark. Here were just a couple of pictures to advertise the quality. (**We have lots pics on FOGBEE Shutterfly page**)



Our first problem was in Rockmart. From Cedartown, the **Silver Comet** had gone well until we got lost in Rockmart. Our plan was to remove the trail and meet Andrew with the SAG. Not using a GPS, I incorrectly followed the **Silver Comet** signs. Dave with his Wahoo accurately took us off the **Silver Comet** and found the van.

Our second problem was during lunch at Wendy's on the Paulding Diversion. Getting to and from the restaurant was challenging. Heavy auto traffic crossed four-lane highways between us and Wendy's. Several of us nearly got hit by cars in the process.

Our most serious problem was getting off Concord Rd and having **America Expended Motel** not having our rooms.

Concord Rd was not part of the Silver Comet (see map below.) For six miles, we competed with Atlanta's Friday traffic on a four-lane road that was so dangerous that all of us but Dave chose to ride on the sidewalk full of lumps and cut-throughs not meant for bicycles. Our frustration only got worse when we got to the motel. They didn't have our rooms.

I showed them THEIR written confirmation for three rooms. It made no difference. They only had one of our rooms on their computer. They had OUR confirmation number on another person and didn't have the type of room on our other confirmation. We canceled all the rooms, loaded the bikes into the



van, and headed for southeast Atlanta.

Once we got to Lithonia, far enough away from Atlanta, we found a Super 8 that had four rooms for two nights. It was also much less expensive.

By then, we needed an adult beverage. No one admitted to finding the **Spice Lounge**. Our appearance did not match its clientele. Nevertheless, they were very pleasant but hid us in the farthest corner.

Spice Lounge was a hookah bar that served weird food. With armed police guards around the establishment, we decided to eat and leave before the real fun began. Sometimes our strangest experiences will become our most frequent stories.



Most important the **SILVER COMET TRAIL**. <http://www.silvercometmap.com/> has a quality safe trail that leads to Smyrna on the **East-West Connector** – not Conrad Rd.

In May 2012, the FOGBEES did the **SILVER COMET** as one of their overnight excursions. Their trip information is on their blog <http://fogbees.blogspot.com/search/label/Spring%20Overnighter>.

Their web page was <https://fogbees.blogspot.com/p/silver-comet.html> and their photo page is <https://fogbees.shutterfly.com/4852> . The following details summarizes their adventure.

FOGBEE 2012 SILVER COMET

The **Silver Comet** <http://www.silvercometmap.com/> was 62 Miles from the Alabama border. The non-bicyclists dropped us at the border with the **Chief Ladiga** at the Alabama border and the bicyclists rode back to Atlanta. Drive route <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/1088565>

45 miles of the Comet was reasonably flat. A few sections had hills that went off the railbed. We took our time and had a lunch stop at one of the towns along the trail, ending up in the Atlanta area at a hotel near the trail. As always, we planned daytime activities for the non-riding spouses/significant others.

FRIDAY (stayed at **Hampton-Atlanta Galleria**)

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/atlgrhx-hampton-suites-atlanta-galleria/>

For dinner, gather in the lobby around 6:30 going to **Jock and Jills** <https://jocksandjills.com/>

SATURDAY

8:00 AM - Meet in **Publix Parking Lot** (S Cobb Dr & **East/West Connector**). Meet near Burger King. Leave cars. FYI: **Smyrna Bicycle Shop** is near this location <http://www.smyrnabicycles.com/>

9:30 AM - Arrive near AL-GA border **Esom Hill** (Hardin Rd)

11:30 AM - **Rockmart** and **Fankies** Italian (mile Marker 37.4)

1:30 PM - (Optional) Lunch in **Dallas** (Marker 19.43mi) **Ruby Tuesdays**

2:30 PM - Back on the bikes, if you eat lunch. Due to heat several will bypass.

4:30 PM - End ride at **Publix Parking Lot** and find nearby watering hole.

6:00 PM - Return to motel & cleanup for dinner

7:00 PM - Group Dinner: **Stoney River Legendary Steak House**. <http://www.stoneyriver.com/>



May 28 Sat - Lithonia REST DAY

Lithonia was our **Rest Day**. We did laundry, changed our schedules, and did mostly nothing.

A brand new laundry was in the nearby strip mall. Everyone loaded up a week of biking clothes on trash bags, climbed on the van, and spent an hour in early morning washing and drying.

While waiting on our laundry to complete, Bruce and Dave suggested an idea, ***“Let’s cancel our motel on Evans Mill and move the others by one day.”***

Our Super 8 at the Poala was only four miles away from Microtel in Evans Mill. I had already mapped a ride for the next day from the Super 8 to **Stone Mountain** and back to the Microtel. I wasn’t pleased with the Atlanta traffic and the neighborhoods. I chose not to offer my option. It didn’t make sense to hang around another day.

Bruce and Dave volunteered to call our next confirmed seven motels and move them. The task took them a couple of hours, but by noon they were successful. We had nothing more to do for the rest of the day but rest.

Nevertheless, the kid, Andrew, was restless. **Stone Mountain** was only eight miles away. He wanted us to ride the van. I was surprised nobody wanted to join him. It was their Rest Day and that was exactly what they wanted. Andrew coerced Dave to join him. Good thing I didn’t mention my Stone Mountain bike ride.

Our experience in Atlanta was not pleasant. Neither Bruce nor I properly researched **Silver Comet East-West Connector** and found alternate motels even though we both rode it in 2012. **Conrad Rd** wasn’t suitable for bicyclists. The **East-West Connector** had a great greenway trail similar to the Silver Comet. The **Silver Comet was great and worth repeating** similar to the **2012 FOGBEE trip**.

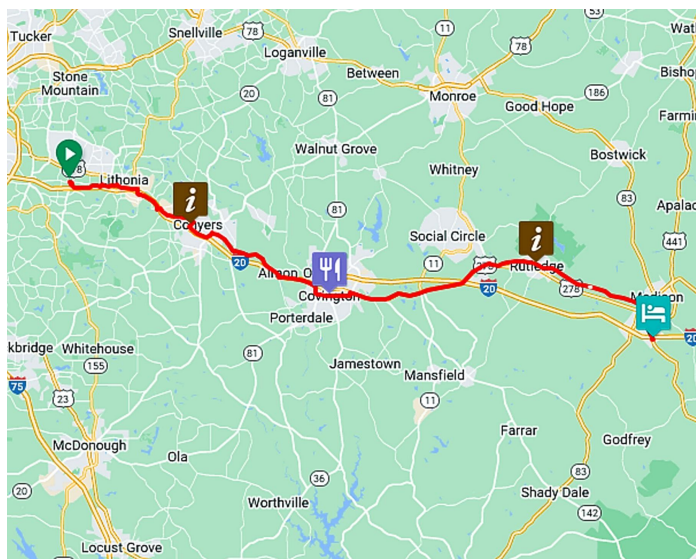
Nevertheless, I am not sure the results would have been different for us. All the roads were jammed with cars whose drivers were not pleased to share any of their space with bicyclists. Even before we started H2O, Bruce did not want to pedal across Atlanta. He volunteered to SAG our route from Smyrna to Lithonia. Even in 2012, Atlanta was hazardous for bicyclists. **Unanimously, we agreed. We would never attempt to bike across Atlanta.**

Lithonia also had its issues. Nearly every fast-food restaurant had only drive-in service. Major businesses had armed guards, including our motel. Ross and I asked the cop at our motel to explain. We noticed the Knight Inn next to us was not open.

He said, *“This area has been very troubled with criminal activity. The business owners are trying to recover from the negativity.”*

Other than the heavy police presence and the evident demographic (5% white), we would have never noticed an issue. According to <https://crimegrade.org/safest-places-in-lithonia-ga/>, **Lithonia had an overall crime rate of F**. We were ignorant of the problem. It was just another reason for us to “get out of Dodge and never return.”

May 29 Sun - Lithonia to Madison



The route was **49 miles** from Lithonia Super 8 to Madison Days Inn. The elevation change was



1926 feet. The route was on County and City roads, except for 3 miles on gravel past Rutledge.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39580988>

We had another great day for a bike ride - upper sixty degrees and bright blue skies with small white puffs of clouds. We passed historic towns of Covington, Rutledge, and Madison. They made bike touring unusually special. However, we did run into an unexpected problem.

Bruce revised our route from our motel on Panola Rd four miles away to our original motel on Evans Mill Rd. By 8:30, we were anxiously on our way to Madison, but within a half-hour, we came to a dead stop. The river bridge over the Access Road Northeast, intersecting Cowell Road, was down. We could not cross it. We had to improvise.



Bruce, Dave, and I pulled out Google Maps on our cell phones and searched for detours.

Bruce found the shortest alternative. We had to pedal about five miles south on Cowell Road and turn east on Browns Bridge Road. From here, in another three miles, we could pick up our original route.

We added about three or four miles, but it worked well.

The lunch stop was in Covington. This place was unreal. The town was packed with pretty young ladies everywhere. It was Sunday morning. I surmised all the old folks were in church and left the place full of beautiful college-age kids.



Historic downtown Covington was known as a film town, home to locations from "The Dukes of Hazzard," "In the Heat of the Night" and, most recently, "The Vampire Diaries" and "Sweet Magnolias," along with 140 other films. The thriving downtown has locally owned boutiques, antique stores, and restaurants.

Riding for a place to eat, we found four restaurants around the city square. We found an empty lunch table at the **City Pharmacy**.

We didn't want to leave! Too bad.

Our afternoon SAG stop was in **historic Rutledge GA**. This tiny little town had a population of fewer than 900 people. As part of the Covington movie industry, it had a small scenic town center that was grander in size. We relaxed in its half-acre park that was regaled in preparation for Memorial Day.



Bob had to leave us with a zinger somewhere on his tour. Instead of Bob routing us onto the paved rural E Dixie Hwy, he put us onto the parallel Hightower Rd.



For three miles we traveled on a gravel surface with nickel size stones. We stopped several times on our written route to double-check the selection.

Once off Hightower Rd, we had a comfortable trip into our Days Inn motel in Madison.

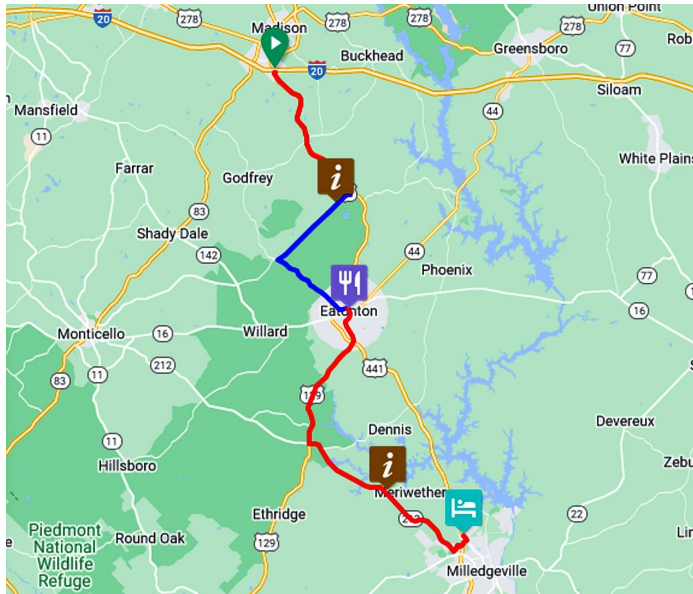
We couldn't find a nearby place for dinner other than a half-dozen fast-food services. Our best alternative was Cracker Barrel.

Afterward, Dave and Bruce toured some local antebellum homes. The others were not interested. Madison was featured on **Georgia's Antebellum Trail**, and designated as one of the state's **Historic Heartland** cities. Many of the nearly 100 antebellum homes have been carefully restored. Some of the grand-style Federal homes were built during the town's cotton-boom heyday from 1840 to 1860.

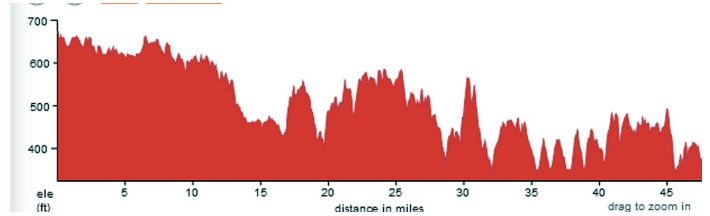
Normally, I would have joined them but in the following week, I had a greater treat around Charleston and Beaufort South Carolina.



May 30 Mon - Madison to Milledgeville



The route was **48 miles** from Madison Days Inn to Milledgeville Days Inn. The elevation change



was **2068 feet**. Twenty miles was on rumbled State roads with ten miles on **dangerous Gray Rd** (mile-23 to mile-33). The other route was on County roads.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39581051>

The sky was clear with only a handful of cotton-ball clouds. But, that didn't last. About a mile down US 441, a dense fog set in. On the 500-foot visibility, we dodged a two-foot-wide rumble strip and debris on the four-foot shoulder. Every couple of minutes, we slid back and forth between the road and the shoulder as we shared the space with cars and semi-trucks.



Andrew was a tenth of a mile and the other four of us could not see him. I am not sure the cars and trucks on our two-way lane could see him either. He was without lights. Fortunately, he stayed on the far right of the rumble strip on the shoulder. For ten miles we carefully rode the narrow shoulder and avoided traffic.

We thought that would be the worst of today's bike riding. Nope.

Once we turned to the right onto Union Chapel Road (UCR), we were on rural traffic-little auto traffic and the fog lifted. Our first SAG stop was at Union Chapel United Methodist Church.



The strange thing we saw on UCR was a farmer's acre lot with thirty or forty "dog" houses for little calves resting nearby.



We arrived at Eatonton around 10:30. Known as the Dairy Capital of Georgia, it had six thousand residents with 33% as white. Its large county seat building dominated the center of a town that was vacant. Nobody was around. It was Memorial Day.



Tim had parked the van on the short boulevard in front of the courthouse. He was nowhere to be seen. He was walking around trying to find a restaurant for lunch. The only food service open was McDonald's. It wasn't our plan, but lunch is lunch.

About eight old darkies sat on a picnic table outside McDonald's. They reminded me of our weekday Octo-lunch group. When our group arrived, we provided a new topic for their discussions. They enjoyed talking with us. I wish we would have taken their picture.

By noon, we were back on our bikes. The heat was rising in the upper-middle eighties.

The next eight miles on Gray Rd was a typical state road and a nightmare. The asphalt two-lane road was twenty-four foot wide and had four-foot shoulders with two-foot wide rumble strips. The hilly rural road was forested lined with random breaks of flat lands. About every half minute, cars and

semi-truck full of timber hanging twenty feet over their forty-long trailers passed us faster than the fifty-five mph speed limit. As they avoided us, they pulled to the left lane over the center rumble line with a loud alert.

We carefully dodged the vehicles that got much too close and the debris that got much too frequent. Bruce described it as follows in his CGOAB journal,

The last half of the route was less pleasant. We had about ten miles on a newly paved but rumbled on both shoulders and the centerline road. Pity, without the deep wide rumbles the shoulders would have been wide enough to ride out of the traffic lane. As it was we had to ride close to the white line as 80 mph traffic passed inches away. Though not terribly heavy, traffic was frequent enough that passing cars could not get more than a few inches into the opposing lane. Overall traffic did a good job getting around us but it was a nerve-racking experience. Additionally, climbs got longer and the day got hotter. I could not take my attention from steering to drink so got dehydrated.

As we turned east off **Gray Rd** and onto GA-212, we proclaimed, “**Now that was a lot of fun.**”

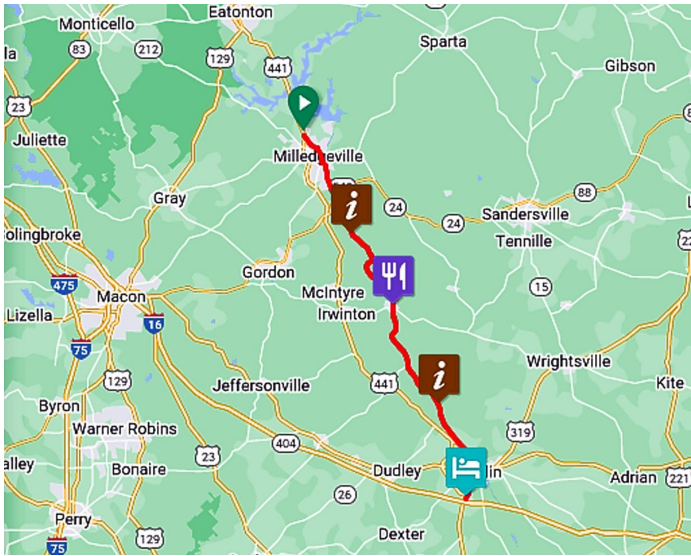
Our destination Milledgeville was a town of 18,000 residents. Laid out in 1803, this cotton boom town was took slave auctions. William T. Sherman passed this Georgia capital city in his march to the sea. After reconstruction in 1868, the capital moved to Atlanta along with its prosperity.



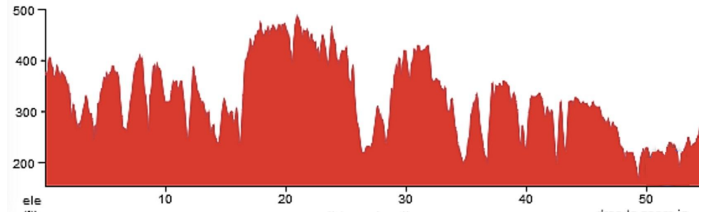
One by one, we arrived at the Milledgeville Days Inn from 1:30 to 2:30. The sun was hot from 88 to 91 degrees and humid enough to fire up an afternoon rain storm.

Dinner this evening was this surprising find - a Japanese fast food restaurant. We didn't bother with any of the historic downtown areas with their various bars and restaurants.

May 31 Tue - Milledgeville to Dublin



The route was **54 miles** from Milledgeville Days Inn to Dublin Days Inn. The elevation change



was **2539 feet**. The route had no convenient services and the bridge being down at mile-34. The route was on County roads.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39581107>

Our detour East Dublin to Dublin added 3 miles

Our route from Milledgeville to Dublin passed nothing more convenient than the ubiquitous Dollar General. We knew no lunch was going to be available. But, we still had a couple more surprises.

Our motel had the minimum breakfast. If anyone wanted something more substantial that scraps at General Dollar. They needed a morning visit to the nearby Waffle House. Andrew, Tim, and I went for food, but Dave and Ross chose an early start on the ride. With the temperature scheduled for 93 degrees, they hope to get ahead before the mid-afternoon heat. **Unexpectedly, their plan failed.**



About three miles south of town the fog set in. The visibility was about a tenth of a mile, but auto traffic was light – may be only a passing vehicle once every couple of minutes. The temperatures stayed around 72 degrees.

The cool morning and light traffic were pleasant, but biking was boring. The two-lane GA 112 road was mostly level and passed along miles of rows of thirty-foot high trees. Every so often an edge line of bushes or random double-long dump truck broke the monotony.

Toomsboro, twenty miles away, was our only town. As expected, only the ubiquitous Dollar General offered service. The town only had 362 residents.



In 2012, David Bumgardner and Bill Lucado bought the property in an auction and tried to turn the property into a quaint tourist destination or sell the place for \$1.7 million as a film set. From what we saw, the buildings were nearly abandoned and had nothing to sell.

We did, however, have two big surprises at the corner of GA 112 and 57.

The **Big Sandy Creek Bridge**, seven miles south of Toombsboro, was down. We could not pass.



Thanks to a local delivery man and our Google Maps, Dave and I concocted an alternate route that took us to East Dublin and then into our Days Inn motel in Dublin. That added a seven-mile detour to our 54-mile route, but we had no choice. By the time Andrew, Bruce, and Tim arrived at Dollar General, all five of us were ready to go.

However, I had some additional trouble. The motel operator had called Bruce and told him the participant in room 122 left his wallet. That was me. Ross drove me 27 miles back to the motel.

Dave took off to his devised detour. Andrew, Bruce, and Tim followed Dave about a half-hour later.

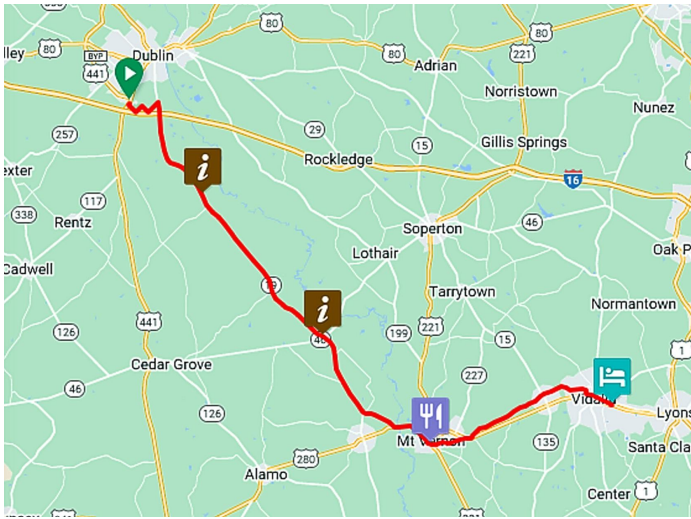
When I fetched my wallet at the motel, I tried to reward the Indian motel owner. She refused to accept anything. I tried to slip a twenty-dollar bill to her three-year-old daughter. She blocked that. **Tell me that those people still exist.**

By the time everyone arrived at Toombsboro Dollar General, the fog had cleared around noon. Our 72-degree morning was becoming a 91-degree hot sunny afternoon. Dave would not been able to ride at the high temperatures and speedy Andrew, Bruce, and Tim. He described his detour as east along GA 57 and then south on GA 68. It continued to be an easy rural ride.

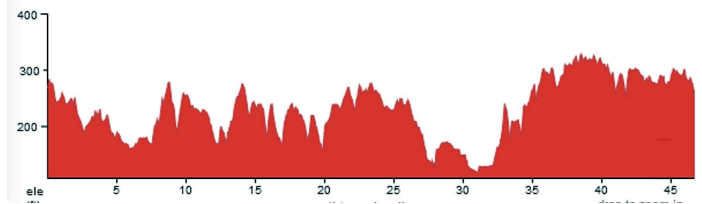
After recovering my wallet, Ross and I chased down the group. We offered each “a lift,” but they were satisfied with the change. Rarely a car or truck passed every five or more minutes. Even with the extra miles, everyone found the bike ride as pleasant but boring.

Everybody arrived at Dublin **Day's Inn** around 3 PM. Supper was at Longhorn steakhouse with Andrew and Tim testing several versions of the margaritas. Afterward we went to Baskin Robbins for a less alcoholic treat.

Jun 1 Wed - Dublin to Vidalia



The route was **47 miles** from Dublin Days Inn to Vidalia Days Inn. The elevation change was



1440 feet. The route had 28 miles of State roads and balance on boring County roads rising out of Mt. Vernon.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39581154>

Today was a long boring 28-mile ride on GA 19. With the weather forecasted over 90 degrees in a clear sky Dave, Ross, and I started at 7 AM. Bruce had an unusual two SAG stops: at Harden Grocery at mile-19 and optional lunch at Jim Bob intersection at mile-46 (pictures shown below.)





But the early start changed opportunities for lunch plans. The second chance for lunch was scheduled for Mt. Vernon at La Cabana. Because Dave, Ross, and I left early at 7 AM to avoid the heat, we arrived near 10 AM. It was not yet open.

Dave and I waited for about a half-hour. If we waited for the restaurant to open and included an hour for eating, we would have negated the purpose of the earlier morning start.

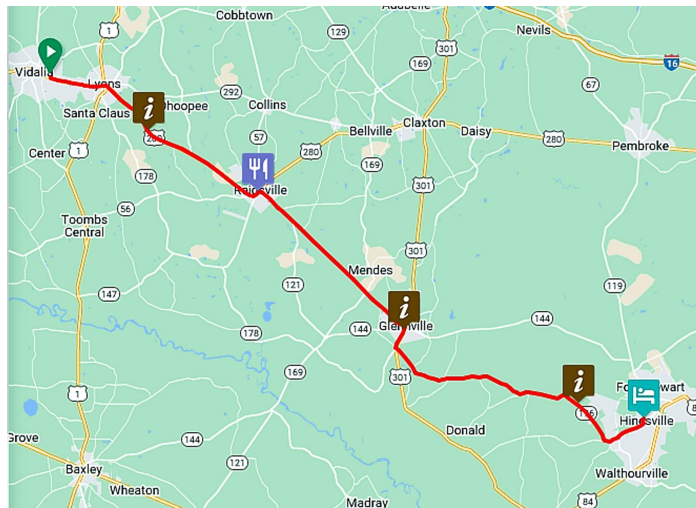


Andrew, Bruce, Ross, and Tim could stay for the lunch plan in Mt Vernon. It should have opened when they arrived. I rode the hour to Vidalia and Ross and I ate at Pizza Hut next to our **Day's Inn** motel.

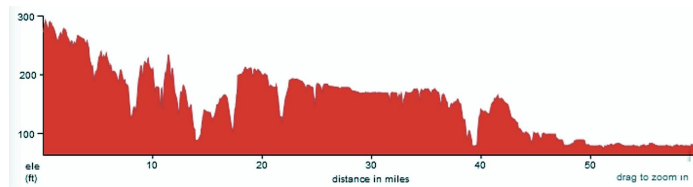


Andrew and Tim waited anxiously for dinner. We were going to the Rio Grande and they could order several more margaritas.

Jun 2 Thu - Vidalia to Hinesville



The route was **60 miles** from Vidalia Days Inn to Hinesville Baymont Inn. The elevation change was

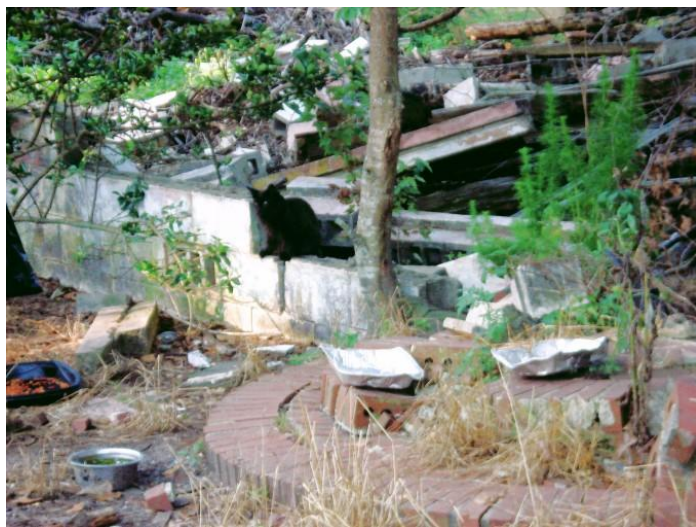


was easy **997 feet**. The route had mostly State roads with moderate to light traffic.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39581190>

Today was the big one - temperature forecasted at 97 degrees and a 60-mile route. Our savior was a mostly level road with light traffic. We agreed the prior evening to buy some more water and to leave at 7 AM. Our route was not as bad as we expected. We were averaging around 15 mph. Maybe our faster breeze made the temperature less.

Bruce had the first SAG. He parked next to a collapsed building where some people were feeding cats. He saw them. When I arrived after 9 miles for my SAG turn, I never saw any cats.





As we stopped after 19 miles for the second SAG at the Dairy Queen, the trees had begun to change. We had gone from deciduous to pine trees and now to palm trees. Our elevation was around 200 feet.

The Dairy Queen had originally been our lunch stop but with our early starting time and faster biking speed, we arrived before 10 AM. We foraged on to mile 35 at McDonald's in Glenville

Some of the vegetation near the Hinesville road was burning. I could smell sweet sorghum as we rode. I remembered that wonderful aroma when I was kid.



Our last SAG was on mile 53 and Gum Branch park. The night before, we had stored up extra water. However, everyone was handling the extra distance and heat well. Andrew, Dave, and Tim rode the entire 60 miles. Bruce and I with our SAG did around 50 miles. Ross had switched over SAG duties at Dairy Queen.

Our restaurant for the evening was **Izola's Country Cafe**. This cafe was one of the weirdest places I had been, but it was great - it was inexpensive, wonderful food, and almost private to us.

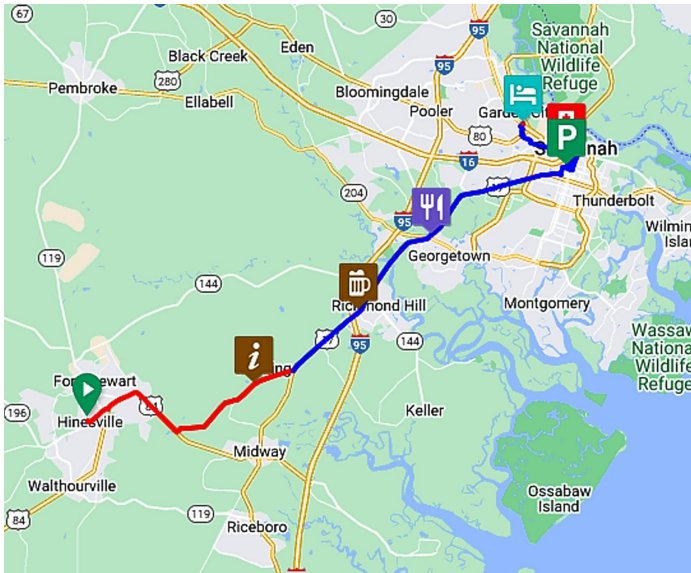


When I walked in, I walked back out. The door was covered in a corridor with all this strange decor. I thought I was in the room of a gypsy psychic and not a cafe.

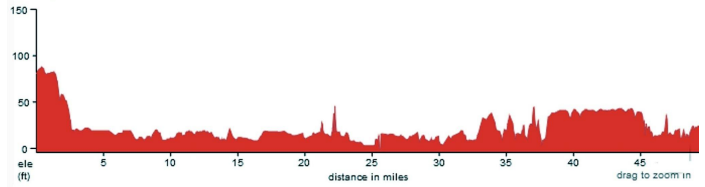
The path left to a long table full of "meat and three" food. For ten dollars, I got two portions of meat and three sides. For thirteen dollars, the guest could eat all he wanted.

Owners Glenn and Lori Poole came over to visit with us. The family that has been in the restaurant business for over forty-three years has seen become a TikTok sensation, with fans from all over the world with southern staples on its breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus.

Jun 3 Fri - Hinesville to Garden City



The route was **50 miles** from Hinesville Baymont Inn to Garden City Econolodge. The elevation



change was easy **451 feet**. The route had mostly County and City roads with a moderate level of traffic. About 5 miles roamed around historic Savannah.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/39665396>

On Friday, we had 50 miles to complete H2O. Bruce and I revised our map to roam us around Savannah rather than go directly to Garden City. I laid a circuitous path through the “squares” and Bruce found a way to park the van so Ross could join us.

I tried to get us a reservation at Savannah's World Famous **Pirates House** located on one of the most historic spots in Georgia. Initially opened in 1753, it was an inn for seafarers and became a meeting point for **pirates** and sailors. As suspected, it was completely booked for the entire day. As an alternative, Andrew selected Savannah's **Funky Brunch Cafe**. Both the food and eye candy were appetizers.



Everyone was anxious to begin at 7 AM so we had extra time to do touristy things. The four-lane road into Savannah was crowded, but we didn't have a problem with the traffic. All went well until traffic lights severed Dave and me from the group. Andrew, Bruce, and Tim quickly went out of sight. I then got a flat tire as Dave disappeared in front of me. I thought for sure I was “on my own.”

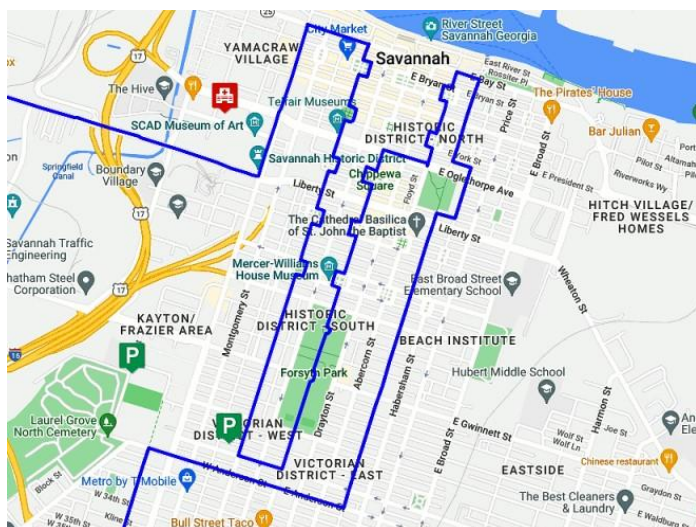
Unexpectedly, Andrew sent a text message to the group, “*Tom has a flat.*”

In minutes, everyone was alongside me watching me fix the tire. Ross brought me the pump and in about fifteen minutes we were back on the road. As always, I was following Dave. Andrew, Bruce, and Tim took off again on their route.

Dave led us to the YMCA where we were supposed to meet Ross with the van. Out of surprise, Andrew, Bruce, and Tim reappeared. We now had Ross. My job and Garmin were to be the tourist guide around Savannah.

All started well until Tim jammed his chain in his chainset. For fifteen minutes, we struggled to release the chain and, in the process, provided entertainment for a dozen neighbors as they watched us.

We went back and forth from Anderson to East Bay visiting eleven “squares” and Forsyth Park, taking pictures, having lunch at Andrew’s Funky Brunch, and eating homemade ice cream before heading to Garden City.





Andrew's job throughout the tour was to select dinner. He was always the first who wanted to eat, who had the most to eat, and who drank the most margaritas. He selected dinner at the **Public House Cafe** in Savannah in the northeast side of the historic section.



We sat outside under an awning. A threatening rain had cooled the weather making it comfortable. We had a chance to watch life pass us by while we enjoyed our meal.

After dinner, Tim, Andrew, and Bruce walked to the riverfront to glance at Savannah's nightlife. Unfortunately, they only got 5 minutes before they had to meet Dave, Ross, and me with the van on Bay Rd.

They really should have returned with the van and walked a couple of hours along the riverwalk. I expected I would return in a week with my family.

Jun 4 Sat - Garden City to HOME

The bike ride always seems too short and the car return seems too long. We were ready shortly after 7 AM.



Dave drove to lunch in Atlanta. Sometime between Atlanta and Cattanooga Andrew took over. Throughout most of that drive, I slept. We arrived in Hendersonville around 3 PM at Dave's house.



Ross and I sat outside my upper deck, watched the lake, drank Bud Lite, and ate any scraps I had in my pantry. When dusk set in, we were ready for bed. In the morning, Ross had an eight-hour drive to Wiggins Mississippi.

Ross said that he had a couple of rides scheduled with Bobby in July. I told him that I wish I had his 83-year-old energy. During our trip, I watched him with great jealousy as he skipped around at twice my speed.

At the end of June, I am just finishing this story and I still have not recovered. Whatever his method is, he has it figured out.