

Kurt & Michele's Big Adventure July 11 – 26

Traveling through 8 states,

Including KS, MO, IL, IN, OH, PA, NY, and KY

3,950 miles

"WE'RE NOT ROOKIES

ANY MORE"

Started out rookies! Yes, that's for sure, and we also started out each day right with a prayer and ended our trip with a prayer, with many in between. The very best thing about this trip was being with my Michele'e and the way she squeezed me with her legs and then gave me a big bear hug from behind, followed with a, "I luv you Kurtie", made my heart skip a beat. I could feel the love and trust flow through my veins like I had never felt before. And freedom, "wow" there is nothing like being on a trike with the wind in your face, nope, nothing like it. I had been missing it for so long, envying every biker that I heard go by. But you know what, Gods timing is always the right timing and He worked this whole thing out starting with us getting the trike. Then He worked out this entire vacation, I can't thank Him enough for all that He did, for our safety and most of all, for our friends. All spring different things would come and go and the trip was on and off, well not off but, you know, up in the air. But then it all came together and we both had, "The time of our lives". Never have we gone so far (in the US) and stayed away from home so long. But we did it, plus we checked off all the things on our little list that we wanted to do and we got to see more of this beautiful country than we ever expected, loving every minute of it. Have I told you that yet? Our friends, our friends, our friends, they met us with open arms and open hearts and feasted us with everything under the sun. We laughed, we cried, we hugged. The hospitality we felt was unheard of, crazy, and fattening. Everywhere we went was so fun and so new and we love you all that took part in our adventure. We are real sad we missed a few friends that wanted to see us, but like I said, "This is the first of **as many road trips as God will allow us to have**", and we already have more trips in the making. Next March; maybe the Gulf, July; the Rockies and I can already see Gods hand in working this all out for July 2012. We are not sure exactly where, when or how many yet, but we're

Work en on it.

IF YOU WANT TO GO WITH US, JUST LET US KNOW!

The more the merrier.

And Now-Our Trip

Well the adventure actually started out on Sunday evening the 10th of July and we didn't get to bed until well after midnight, you know how that goes. We packed and repacked until we had it just right, everything that we needed and we were off the next morning by 5: AM. It started out cool that morning

for a little while, but we knew the forecast was calling for very hot temps later on, over the century mark. Guess what; they were right, as we passed through different towns, thermometers kept reminding us that it really was the middle of July. It averaged 103 all the way across Missouri and when we got on the other side of St. Louis a good piece, we stopped for the night.

Our first leg of the trip was done. The motel had a nice little Italian restaurant right next to it and they were both well appreciated. A good night's sleep and a quick little bite and we were on our way. Day 2, oh yea baby, we were feeling more and more like bikers every hour. The *biker wave* was becoming a fluid motion as we met bike after bike and I was starting to get the feel of my Harley like never before; it was becoming a part of me and it felt good. Stopping every couple hours or so for gas and a cappuccino or snack and then leaving each place with a little "Harley talk" as our pipes sang out that beautiful sound that only a Harley can make. That's ok Nick. It's all good.

I have now managed to hit good ol' St. Louie (5:00 pm) Indianapolis (Noon) and Columbus (5:30). God, what are you doing to me? That was some crazy traffic. I guess he wanted to see if I could pray and drive a Harley with 5 lane traffic at the same time. Well, I got that down pat. By now I was thinking I could drive anywhere. I'm as good as them guys in, "Wild Hogs", you know, that silly movie. We were living it! Well we made it up to Amish country just a ways north of Columbus OH and pulled in at a nice little village along the interstate and got ourselves another motel. We saw a nice Amish Family Restaurant nearby and thought we would give it a try. Wow, I found a place better than Golden Coral. The food was awesome. The guy at the motel noticed we were big time bikers (lol) and suggested we take the trike down this little hi-way that runs down through the valley where the farms all belong to the Amish. He said it was quite pretty and he was right. The crops looked great and the farms pristine. The houses glowed in the evening shadows with their candles in the windows, it looked so American. We saw so many places that looked so peaceful and eager for us to move in, but on we must go our mission to fulfill.

We were up even earlier the third morning and feeling like pro's at getting the trike loaded and ready for the road. It was cool and sprinkling that morning, but it felt good. We rode hard for a couple hours before hunting down a Bob Evans restaurant for some breakfast. The food was great, but a little pricey. Oh well, its vacation time and that was really starting to sink in. We were gone and not coming back for a while, bye bye hot Kansas. Man, was that a good feeling. This has to be my most relaxed vaca ever. Kids, now don't get me wrong. We loved every minute you were with us. But this is now and that was then and you can only get two on the trike anyway. Just remember, we love you. But for now we have a Harley and I am glad to say, "We

live to ride and ride to live". You both know we will stop in from time to time. Don't you?

Well we left Bob's place with full tummys and you know what that means, not too far down the road just inside PA and this boy had to stop for a little nap. The scenery was really changing and I could see why the Pennsylvanians love their state so much. The rolling mountains were just gorgeous and you could smell the pines as we were cruising down the road. Next, we set up a time to meet my main man Nate. We messed around there a few hours and he showed us around the neighborhood and then it was on the road again. Only a couple hours and we would be to our final destination for a few days. 2-3-4 Motorsports was first on the list to drop off the trike for service work and then off to Shane and Tess's place. Shane also has guided for me for over 12 years. His place was beautiful, spectacular and awesome. The view is to die for! Pines and mountains and a babbling brook to boot with trout. I saw it. Shane, Shane, I love you Shane and Tess and family. Thank you for sharing your home with us. 50's in the morning and 80's during the day. Right now it's 88 degrees as I am writing this and the time is 11:11pm, it was a whopping 110 today, enough already.☺

We stayed at Shane's Wednesday through Sunday night except for Friday night we stayed at Tony's deer camp. We were having fun just winging it and everyone was so nice. Shane wanted to take us for a ride up to the PA Grand Canyon, so we worked it out for Saturday so that way a few others could go with us. Rocco Gillott had a small get together at his house Friday evening and we had a chance to see Linda Caldwell, Doug Little and a few others that we hadn't seen for quite some time. It was another great time and we appreciated it so much, thanks Rocco. The hugs and smiles will never be forgotten. Some of you guys went above and beyond our expectations and I just can't say enough. The night was short and for some it was even shorter. But somehow we were all up early the next morning, still smiling and really anticipating the day's upcoming event. Michele'e and I were also very eager to get back on our Harley that had been resting in the 2-3-4 shop for a couple days getting some service work done, some LED lights put on and our very own helmet intercom system put in our helmets. There ended up being 7 of us going on the Little Grand Canyon trip, 3 Trikes and 3 Bikes. John Butts was on the New camo trike, Tony was on the Zebra, Doug Miles, Shane and Tess were on their Harleys and it really felt good to be back in our saddle again. It was another unbelievable time with some of the most beautiful scenery a man could ask for. The smiles were as endless as the roads winding up and down the mountain sides. And to top it off, an eagle flew right over our heads as we were coming down the mountain and it was Michele's first sighting of one in the wild, awesome and very close. You couldn't have asked for a better view. What a day, thank you Jesus. I remember thinking that day that

this little group riding up to the PA Grand Canyon was Michele and My very first road trip with more than 3 bikes. Man, now that really made us feel like biker dudes and it was only day six. Sunday morning we were back at Shane and Tess's place and we all slept in a little later than usual. The air was cool and clear, the rooster was crowing, the peacock was tapping on the window, all right on cue, a small taste of Heaven. Slowly we made ourselves human again with a quick shower, coffee, and some breakfast. It was so nice and peaceful at Shane and Tess's place that we really didn't want to go. Another busy day was on the menu, so the girls sent us boys to the grocery store while they got ready. When we got back they put some salad dishes together for a picnic at Tony's deer camp/home. It was another quick get-together plan that turned out great with a bunch of friends coming over with more than enough food to feed a small army. Man it was sure good to see everyone. Some of these people I hadn't seen for 5 or 6 years. Thank you so much Tony, words can't express how we feel about you and this isn't the time or place to get all mushy about it. After the picnic we headed back to Shane's for the evening and packed up our belongings and got ready for the cruise the next morning to Nick Trotta's house in Greenville NY. The morning ride out of Shane's - "God's country" was sad but stunning. It was so cool you needed your leathers on, but I gritted my teeth and soaked in as much as I could. Cool mountain pine air, there is nothing like it, that's for sure. I can't wait to smell it again someday.

Well it ended up being Shane and Tess both on their Road Kings, Tony and his friend Candy were on the Wild Zebra stripped Honda Valkyrie and Michele and I were on our Harley Road King Trike. Off with a roar to the mountains of NY, home of the Catskills and the Adirondacks. Shane knew the route we wanted, so he was out of the chute first. For a while we followed him, but then Tony got in between us and I decided right then that the new scenery was much better. I would take staring at Candy's back side any day over Shane's. So on we went in our little biker motorcade. The mountains of PA are gorgeous and from the bike it seems like you can see so much more. The smells you get along the way are some of my best memories, except for the occasional dead carcass. The strong pine aroma mixed with a smorgasbord of vegetation on the forest floor was like that of an expensive potpourri. Something we never smell in Kansas, that's for sure. Anyway, the trip to Nicks was exciting and fun. Stopping here and there for gas and a treat and talking about what happened since the last time we stopped. We had made real good time and as we were cruising along I noticed a sign that said, "Rob Lani's Nursery". I knew we were getting close to Nicks, but I had no idea we were going to go right past Rob's new place. Whoa, Whoa, I finally got Shane and the gang stopped and we turned around and went back and sure enough there he was, the man with the most total inches of horn collected in 3 years at Paradise, Mr. Robert Lani. It was a great surprise to see him and his awesome place; we were going to

get together sooner or later, but didn't realize it was going to happen like this. We gave Nick a call and he came zipping right over. His place is only about 25 minutes away and I'm sure the ol' New Honda Streetline was setting a new record pace. Rob was excited to see us and said that he was pretty sure he could get off the next day and join us for a ride. We visited for a bit and then it was off for Nick's house and this time Nick was out of the chute first leading the way. One by one we chased after him until we reached his domain. His place was like one you might see in a Better Homes and Gardens magazine, very picturesque. We got our gear unloaded for the night and then went out for a bite to eat. Rose and Nick made sure everyone was cozy for the night and I know we all crashed pretty hard, after all we had been on the road since 7 am and it was after 6 pm when we got to Nick's pad. We woke up to another perfect day for riding, starting out in the low 70's and looking for a high in the upper 80's. In fact we had had nothing but great weather all the way so far. After having a nice little breakfast and a cup or two of coffee we all started buzzing around with a new energy for the day ahead. Well sweetheart, I asked the wife, can you believe we made it this far and now we are heading for the Catskills for a day long ride and this is day 8 already. It is so nice here, a beauty of its own. I never really dreamed of the "Big Party" being in such a beautiful area (Woodstock). The TV just doesn't do the area any justice. Shoot, it's no wonder they got so high, I was just looking at the place. Man, what would it be like to live in Hunter, NY or Woodstock?

Down and around, over and up, switch back after switch back. The riding experience was almost surreal feeling for me; it was like a dream come true. The sound coming from the bikes as we weaved up and down the valleys was the music to my ears, something I will remember forever. But the real icing on the cake was being with our friends, "priceless".

The day whizzed by, but mean time Rob was setting up a feast for us that was also like no other. That evening when the ride was over we heading for Rob's house. Nestled in the mountains was this beautiful log home and in it was nothing but loving people. We got to meet a lot of his friends and some relatives. But the main guys I wanted to see were Michael and Grizz. These two have also been hunting with us at Paradise and I was sure glad to see them both. The party ended when no one else could eat a bite. Wow it was hard to leave but we had to try and keep on schedule as much as we could. We had said our good byes to Tony and Candy when we were in the Catskills the day before and now it was time to say good bye to Tess and Shane. They were going to ride with us up to I80 and then head back to Ronovo PA. It was hard to leave our good friends but Lake George and the Adirondacks' were calling. Nick was going to ride with us until we got to our furthest Northern point and then he was off to Quebec and we were headed west towards Lake Placid.

The mountains were once again exceptional to ride through. For the middle of July it felt really nice up there. All alone once again and we were at least 1500 miles from home. The trip so far was absolutely the best time a couple could ask for. Perfect weather and nearly perfect friends.

As you near the city of Lake Placid you go right past the very familiar sight of the ski jumps that was so popular during the Olympics. The town was very picturesque and busy as we drove into the city streets full of lights and shops. The first motel we saw had vacancies so we hurried in. One room left and it was ours. When we had gotten settled in for the night I took the map out to see just where the heck we were. As the wife could tell you, I nearly had a meltdown. I don't think I have ever felt so far away from home. I knew that we had gone nearly 2,000 miles and to me that meant another 2,000 miles for me to drive. This is the one thing that I was not used to, Michele had always done her share or more of the driving; but this time, "ONLY ME, BABY" a little "Vital" for ya. Suddenly this ol' United States looked pretty big and I felt pretty small. And just like most wives, it didn't take her over 10 words to snap me back into reality. I'm not sure what they were now, but at the time they had me so mad that I gave her the silent treatment for at least 30 minutes. Well maybe 20. I showed her! Anyway, it was back on the road early the next morning with our headlight set on Niagara Falls. It was hard to leave the mountains, the fresh air, beautiful scenery and the best part of all, the cool air, but we had to. We bikers don't let the grass grow under our feet to long because the pavement just keeps calling us back.

Well I really don't want to remember the drive from Syracuse to Buffalo that day, but I am sure I will never forget it. It was a nightmare of traffic on a high speed chase, and for myself, I never did see what we were chasing, but I know it must have been fast. And this toll road is one of those roads that won't let you off. You're trapped and at their mercy. The worse thing about it was once we left the mountains that morning the temps did nothing but climb. It was in the upper 90's and breaking all kinds of records as we cruised on down the road. As long as you're moving, you're good, but once we hit the city and the stop lights, things really started to heat up. We slipped our way through the traffic the best we could, making our way towards the area I knew my buddy John had told me to park it for the night. That was the roughest ride of the trip so far, but we made it and we were ready to get wet. Niagara Falls here we come!

We gave John a call as soon as we got settled in and he said they would be right over. It wasn't long and he and his wife were there and ready to take us on our tour. We had never met them before but we had one thing in common, deer hunting and John would be coming out this fall for his first trip to Paradise. As we headed for the Falls John was busy telling us all about the

area and he knew it well because he was a fire fighter for many years and had just retired. The Falls were spectacular as we gazed in amazement and the splendor of it all. There had been a lot of hard work put into this place many years ago, and you could tell it was due for a little renovating. John said the other side was much nicer but he was not happy with the way the Canadians had done the U.S. and he did not want to go over there, which was fine by us. When the sightseeing was done we headed for the casino to meet our friend Mike Crystal and a couple other new deer hunters for 2011. Mike was hard at it in a serious card game but we managed to pull him away and he treated us to one of the most impressive dinners that I have ever seen. It was just about as spectacular as the waters falls. Lobster tails, crab legs, clams, breads and on and on. I know that when it was over, I was ready for bed. It was record setting heat here and that was not what we were looking for, so the next morning the wife and I were on the road before the sun was even up. The ride out of Niagara and around Buffalo NY was so peaceful and the hi-ways were empty. The cool morning air and the scenery were awesome, but we knew the day was going to meet the century mark again so the cruise control was on and the front tire was pointed towards southern Ohio. Our Pastor from many years back had moved out there and we were off to see the Whisnants. We sure enjoyed our quick little tour of the falls and we want to thank John and Loren for it. It was so nice of them to do this and it was really nice meeting them and I can't wait to get them guys in some big Kansas Monster Bucks this winter. The heat was relentless as we headed south and we knew it would probably not let up.

We ended up making it just about back to Columbus OH that day and the bike and I were feeling like old friends and we were enjoying the riding as much as anything. I can't get over the difference there is from riding in a car or van. To me and all the other bikers, there is just nothing like it. We loved it so much and the other riders that we met along the way were all so friendly and eager to find out where we were headed or where we had been. I loved it when this fairly old man came up to me as we were eating in this little cafe and asked, are you the ones on the tricycle? I smiled and said, yes that's us. I asked him, are you the ones on the bike and side car? He replied, yes, that's my grandson and he is 12 and I am 72 and we have been on a nice little trip together to do some bonding. They were cute as they loaded up and headed off. We also talked to a couple other guys that were riding bikes as well and one of them told us that he had gone on a 14,000 mile trip, all alone and never got on one interstate. It took him 3 months; I can't imagine the awesome memories that he has. Now that was impressive to me. I wasn't quite as proud of my 3,000 miles after hearing that. Just give us some time, we'll be there. The next day we were out of the gate early again as the heat was relentless.

Well the wife knew she would recognize the Whisnants house and she was right.

We drove right to it. It was sure good to see Charles and Charity and the country where they lived was beautiful as well. Right out their back door was a huge corn field, which made me feel right at home. We got there in the afternoon and Miss Charity had already made plans for the evening and next

day. They took us down to see the murals that were painted on the flood prevention walls around the river bank that told the history of Portsmouth OH and what had happened in the early days when they had a very historical flood that took the lives and homes of many as well as a good part of the city. The paintings were something else and if you ever get that way it is a must to

see, unbelievable. After that they took us out to eat at a place she had spent a lot of time in, her Dads old Tex-Mex restaurant and man was it good.

I love Mexican food. The next day was Sunday and it was off to church with the Whisnants once again where Charles is the Pastor. After the service they had a big diner for us and a few other good friends came over to their house and once again we had another great feast. I know I have gained weight and that is the only negative side to this whole thing, but not to negative. By this time we were egger to get on the road again and the next big stop would

be home. Yes it was day 14 and we were pretty home sick for our bed and our little fur boys, Chuck, Hoss and Little Joe. That afternoon we made it to Lexington KY and we managed to make it through our first big rain storm. In fact we hit two cloud bursts that day and one was just as we were entering into Lexington city limits, a little scary in the traffic. But we did finally get to put our new rain suits to the test and they passed with flying colors.

Michele was totally dry and I got just a little wet around the mid-section where they have an elastic band to keep it from flopping in the wind. For forty bucks a piece, I thought they did great. Well we kind of ended up staying with one of the Whisnants again that night, but this time it was at Chad's Holiday Inn in down town Lexington that he manages. Well he just happened to have a beautiful room just for us and guess what, it was free.

Thank you Chad, that was awesome.

Well we were on the road again fairly early and by this time it was definitely a piece of cake getting the bike packed and ready to go. We weren't rookies any more. The rest of the trip was pretty much all cruising and we made it home on the 16th day by noon. Our first trip on Harwey (his name) and it will never be forgotten. Thank you everyone that had even the smallest part in this and a special thanks to Tony Marrara and Doug Miles.

They made this all possible and made one of our dreams come true and all because of Gods timing. Hey if this was boring, I bet ya can't wait till next year's trip, huh! Written in Aug 2011 by Kurt Nunnenkamp, See ya,

varooooooooooooommmmm....