



Joyride

I had done it. I'd bought a used Honda Super Hawk, sight unseen, and was midway through my cross-country trip back home. I'd spent two glorious nights with friends on Ozark Lake and was ready to continue my way westward back to Los Angeles. Kathleen, a fellow rider, mentioned some routes and things to see in Kansas, one of the few states I hadn't yet been to. So Kansas it was! And I have to say that in spite of basically not making more than one or two sweeping turns all day, it was a very interesting and fun day!

By the time I was up and packed, it was pouring outside. Miserable, big, heavy, wet rain. What a way to start a 400-mile day. And, of course, I had mapped out all of the twistiest roads of the Ozarks — my last chance for some tire scrubbing until New Mexico.

About 50 miles into the ride, the rain had stopped. The roads were still partially wet, but I was so happy about the reprieve that I didn't even mind the incessant flapping of my rain jacket as it air-dried — well, at first. Fifty miles later, I practi-

is there to do but go insanely fast?

Near the hotel was a house with a for sale sign in front of it, the kind of sign you buy at a hardware store. Next to it was another sign, handwritten on cardboard: "House For Sale. \$2500 OBO." I could have traded my bike for some prime Kansas real estate and still had a couple thousand left over! Welcome to America's heartland! While eating a sandwich at the gas station in town, one of the locals spent a good 20 minutes telling me about his cross-country trips on a Harley Sportster back in the day. Now that is hardcore.

"You need to pick your motel carefully in western Kansas and eastern Colorado," warned Kathleen. "So if the wind shifts in the night, you won't be smelling the stockyards." Oh, yeah. City types always have something to say about farm smells, but being from Oregon, I know what to expect. Why do I keep jinxing myself this way? I didn't have a problem with it at night, but the last couple of hours on the road were all through farmland, not the lush

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cally tore the thing off at a gas stop. But gasing, restrooming, watering, and glove-swapping left me ready to make a fresh start to the day. I guess Mother Nature finally started to feel bad for me, because the rest of the day was great!

I was on Hwy. 54, which was probably as fast as the freeway except when slowing through the occasional little towns. I didn't mind it that day, because I really enjoyed seeing the towns. I also stopped to take pictures of things like the sign announcing the town of Gas, where you can't actually purchase any gas. Go figure.

So my first destination (thanks to Kathleen) was a motel in Yates Center that was crawling with cats — ooh, now that sounds like my kind of motel! The cool part was that the guy at the front desk was wearing a CBRXX T-shirt and belonged to a local CBRXX club "list." (I had to mask my surprise that people in a town that small were on the Internet.) He was as interested in my motorcycle and trip as I was in the cat motel, and the conversation flipped back and forth between cats and motorcycles. For me, it just doesn't get much better than that! And, to my surprise, he told me most of the motorcyclists out there ride fast sport-bikes. Then again, without twisty roads, what else

cornfields of Missouri. Oh no, these were the unbearably stinky dairy farms and who knows what else. Those 40 long miles were an exercise in how long I could hold my breath! Like I said, I'm used to farm smells, but I was seriously on the verge of gagging. Ah, the joys of motorcycle touring!

That night, I holed up in historic Dodge City, Kansas. The old town has been fixed up and played up as Boot Hill, with names like Doc Holliday's Liquor Mart (eh, boss?), Wyatt Earp Blvd., and Boot Hill Cleaners. Oh, and it's also home to the Kansas Teachers Hall of Fame. When the heavy rain started (after I was settled in for the night for a change), I gave my Super Hawk the royal treatment and pushed it into my room for the night.

The next morning, I was up early and ready for another day of adventure on the road. Just my motorcycle and me, unsure of what was in store. And isn't that what life on the road should be? **RB**

"Super" Sarah Schilke, the global category manager for Hein Gericke women's apparel, formerly worked for the AMA's American Motorcyclist Magazine. She is an MSF Instructor, and most recently was the first woman ever elected to the Motorcycle Industry Council's Board of Directors.