

Jim Herold

On my way back to the Lower 48 from Homer, Alaska, I was going about 72 miles per hour in British Columbia when all of a sudden, I hit a hole. I hit so hard it stunned me. I felt like someone took a sledge hammer and tried to drive me in the ground and the bike shook and bounced up and down. I was able to keep it up, but the front tire was busted and the front wheel flattened. After I got back, I found out the bearings in the front were messed up, the switch was busted and both bolts that hold the bottom of the shocks were bent.

I was able to get it to the side of the road without putting it down. My cell phone and some other stuff had popped out of the front storage compartments when I hit the hole. I started walking back to retrieve these items when all of the sudden a Grizzly came running towards me. They say you're not supposed to run but you couldn't tell my feet that.

I ran back to the bike, was lucky enough to pick the right bag to get my bear spray. I also knew I was supposed to have a hunting knife in the same pocket. I was searching for it when I looked up and the bear had stopped. This sounds like a long time, but it was only seconds. Keep in mind, neither of these weapons would have helped a darn bit because the wind was blowing pretty hard in my face and a hunting knife against a Grizzly???? I guess that's the kind of thinking you get with sleep deprivation and fatigue.

Anyway, it was just me, momma bear and her two cubs staring at each other. Still as a mouse. I was on a 2-mile straight stretch with not a soul nearby. After about 10 minutes, I could see a truck with a camper on it coming my way. I waved him down and explained to him what had happened.

I wanted to get my cell phone so he backed up with me walking along side, giving me an escape path in case the bear decided to charge again. Walking back, her two cubs stood on their back legs looking at me like, "Momma, is that going to be our dinner?"

This nice gentleman took me to the nearest place, which was 14 kilometers south. The tow truck picked me up about 2 hours after getting my call. They towed me for 2 hours and we arrived at 2 am and I became the junk yard dog until midnight. At midnight, another tow truck picked me up and we headed to Whitehorse, Yukon and arrived at 6 am. Total time of 30 hours!!!!

I got a room and was back at the Harley shop before it opened. The General Manager came out and said they were not open yet but could offer me the use of the bathroom and a cup of coffee. I told him about meeting him the year before but said this year I have a serious problem. I showed him my bike. He said, "I've got a wheel on its way." I got a cup of coffee and we chatted a bit and a truck pulled in and he said, "Here comes your wheel." They put a new tire on the used wheel (which matched perfectly) and I was out the door by noon. What great service by the Whitehorse Harley Davidson dealership!!!!

Thanks to Beth and Jim for a great ride.

~ Jim Herold, Moncks Corner, SC

