

Samuel Jeppsen

Hello, Beth.

It's me, Sam Jeppsen, that knucklehead who rode his '03 rigid mount Sportster in the 2010 event. I just got your drawing, my certificate and your letter in the mail. Just wanted to drop you a note and say thank you. To you, Jim and the entire gang that made the 2010 Hoka Hey possible. It was a dream come true for me and it was far more than I had ever hoped it would be. I had no illusions of ever winning and I was not willing to ride to win. The gold for me was the ride, the adventure, the scenery, the people and the memories. It was an event I still find myself thinking about, 6 months later. Others have said it was life-changing for them; it was life-changing for me too. I've ridden some fine rides, Beth. I've ridden the entire Baja Peninsula, the Mexico mainland to Guatemala to British Honduras, through the Yucatan Peninsula around the Gulf of Mexico and back to Phoenix, AZ and I've ridden the Pacific Coast Highway four times. All on two- to five-week motorcycle adventures where I slept out all along the way as we did on the Hoka Hey.

But this ride, the Hoka Hey 2010, was like no other ride I have ever taken. The continuous getting up and moving on, the day-to-day challenge, the incredible scenery, the camaraderie with the other riders and the crews you put together, the constant cheering on by you and your crews – all caused continuous spikes of exhilaration and adrenalin inside me. Those spikes came daily, even hourly. The rush of emotions that coursed my veins as I literally became Jim Bronson (1970 TV series: Then Came Bronson, has never left my mind. The feeling of being so different than any other rider I passed by, then or now, was so unexpected and so thrilling and it remains thrilling even to this day.

I am a Hoka Hey Rider and that makes me different from any other rider in the world except those that rode in the 2010. Many riders can speak of their great Iron-Butt rides where they knocked out 1,000 or 1,500 miles in a couple of days, or of a great motorcycle adventure they took, but only the Hoka Hey riders can speak about the longest-biggest-hardest and most grueling iron-butt ride in the entire world. The Hoka Hey. Who can tell of a ride such as ours? And where can we go where our great tale will be less than someone else's?

It was a 13,500 +/- mile ride for me by the time I got back to Arizona. A 26-day motorcycle adventure. Thirty-two days if I count the four days it took me to get to Florida and the two days I spent there before the ride. I left with 42K miles on my Sporty and came home with 55K miles on it. I won't give you any of the totals, as you have plenty, but I will tell you I had two different people stop and wake me up as I was sleeping alongside the road and ask me if I was okay. I guess I did look pretty funny! I just got off my bike and laid down on the pavement or dirt alongside my bike and slept helmet and all. A few hours later I got up and rode away. I had people come up to me and talk to me at almost every stop I made. In Vernal, UT, I had a gal ask me, "Are you one of those guys that is riding to Alaska?" In Wasilla, AK, I had another guy and his wife pull alongside me on their bright and shiny blue FL and ask if I was going to stop to eat. I

didn't understand what he meant or why he asked me such a question, so I told him I was a Hoka Hey Rider on my way to Homer. He said, "I know. I just want to know if you are going to stop for something to eat." I realized then he knew who I was and wanted to visit with me. On the Seward Highway, I had a guy on his brand new red FL pull alongside me and honk and give me the thumbs up. Near the Portage Glacier turn-off in Alaska, I had another gal say, "You're one of them, aren't you?"

People knew who we were, Beth. In the states and in Canada and in Alaska, and we didn't have to say anything at all. Several times I had people who knew about the Hoka Hey just stop and talk to me. For me to be a part of that, left me with a feeling I cannot fully explain or put into words. Six months later, I still have people ask me about the ride and they cannot believe I rode in it. In a few months, I'll be 60 and they can't believe I was part of the Hoka Hey. My children made me a DVD out of my pictures and put it to music; in their eyes and in the eyes of those I work around, they have created an image of me similar to Jeremiah Johnson. I am still receiving things from this ride I had no idea I would ever receive.

I will be forever grateful, Beth, to all of you who worked so hard to put this together. You guys were there for us all the way and you never tired. You guys worked your butts off to make this really memorable for all of us and it was. Big Jim Red Cloud was a treat to meet and meeting Chief Red Cloud will be an honor I will never forget. You fine folk are some of the best I have met.

The few that complained painted a picture that all complained. That's simply not so. They just got the press. The vast, vast majority of us received far more than we ever expected and are still reeling in the spotlight of being a Hoka Hey Rider. Don't listen to the complainers; don't even give them a thought. Chances are they would have complained no matter what. The ride was incredible and the adventure was fantastic. That was the best 1,000 bucks I ever spent and it was cheap for what I got for it. In fact, I have long forgotten the \$1,000 entry fee, but have not, nor will I ever, forgotten the adventure and memories.

I'm a Hoka Hey Rider. No one can ever take that from me and no one can ever top me. Some may take longer rides, even more grueling, but none but a Hoka Hey rider can be a part of the longest-largest-biggest-hardest and most grueling motorcycle ride in the world – except another Hoka Hey rider. To any that are teetering about whether to participate in the 2011, my advice to them is: Go! Go! Go and live the dream. You will never forget it and you will never be sorry.

You guys are the best, Beth. Thanks so very much. If you're ever in Arizona, stop in. You and your fine family will always have a place to stay. And, as I was welcomed at Chief Red Cloud's table, you will always be welcome at mine.

Su amigo siempre
(Your friend always)

~ Sam Jeppsen, Phoenix, AZ