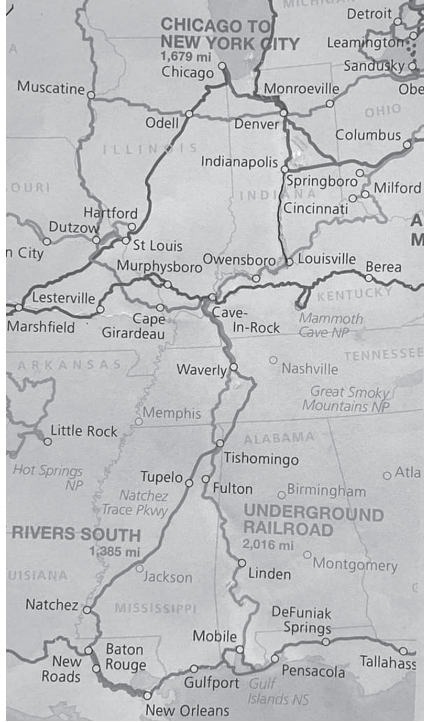


Lake Michigan to Gulf of Mexico

taken from social media from Bill Cooper

I am preparing to possibly do one of the dumbest and most poorly thought out things I have ever attempted in my life. And, I am unfortunately attempting it at a time when I should be considering slowing down and start acting my age. My buddy Marc Leach (Keep Your Daydream) and I have decided to go on a bicycle ride. We are going to ride our bikes from Lake Michigan to the Gulf of Mexico, Florida. The route we are taking is approximately 1,400 miles. We are going to attempt to complete this journey in about 16 days. That math works out to an average of about 88 miles per day. Part of the reason I am posting this is so that when the time(s) come where I say, "What is wrong with me?" and quit, I will be reminded that I just shared this commitment with all of my Facebook friends.



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Thank you for your willingness to hold me accountable for doing what I said I was going to do. I also believe that trying to make something bigger than yourself can provide additional motivation to keep pedaling forward. So I am committing to donating money for every mile I ride to a yet-to-be-determined charitable cause.



Day 1: Back wheel in Lake Michigan - 35-45 mile per hour winds, 38 degrees. Less than ideal.

If you're still reading my diatribe and are wondering why I would do something like this, here are the first things that come to mind;

1) As men get older and acknowledge the fact that they are past their prime, it is rewarding to do things that remind you that you can still do mentally and physically challenging things.

2) There is something about suffering and muscle soreness that is really satisfying and enjoyable.



Downtown Indianapolis on day 3

3) Some of life's best memories are the difficult and challenging ones. I love making new memories, even when there is pain and suffering involved.

4) In the current political climate, I feel as though we are being convinced that the most important thing for all of us to think about is who we voted for, or what party we are affiliated with.

I know we will meet a lot of new people along the way. I also believe that meeting new people will renew my faith in the goodness of most Americans, even the ones that believe in a drastically different role for government in our lives than I do. I am excited about the people we are going to meet, traveling by bicycle from one end of this country to the other.

5) Marc and Trish Leach are good friends, and I know that between the 16+/- days of the monotony of riding a bike, we will make a lot of fun and new memories. Trish is also a great cook, has her own



cookbook and cooking channel, and the food will be great! My wife is highly competitive, and will not just allow Trish to win the sustenance war.

6) My youngest child (Grace) just left for college. I promised myself that once the nest was empty, I was going to take advantage of the freedom I haven't had for 21 years. Here we go...

If you would like to follow any part of the trip, or try to catch me sitting idle and call me out, here is the link to my bike computer. If you click on it I believe it will tell you where I am: <https://dashboard.hammerhead.io/live/8CtP8ABs>

Bicycle trip complete - Lake Michigan to the Gulf of Mexico. I rode with my friend Marc Leach (YouTube channel: Keep Your Daydream) and his amazing 17 year old son Caleb Leach, who intends to join the cycling team at Liberty University next year.

1,341 Miles, 15 1/2 days of riding, total climbs of 61,145' - 1 Bike repair day (Louisville), 1 rain day. Averaged about 90 miles per day, longest day 104 miles.



Take Aways:

- The support and encouragement were appreciated, but what we did was not heroic or something that most healthy people couldn't do. It did not require a high degree of athleticism or intelligence (maybe the opposite). It was simply the decision to keep moving forward - hour by hour, day by day, despite a few aches and pains.

- Headwinds, weather, bad roads, hills, and physical issues all presented challenges - just as in life.

- I went over the handlebars once and Marc and I collided with each other once. The injuries illustrated the types of issues incurred when you do difficult things that are not age- or condition-appropriate.

- I encourage my children to do difficult things. Then when difficult times happen in your life, which they most certainly will, you will be much better prepared to overcome them, because you're used to doing difficult things. I believe that living by example is better than just saying it.



This officer knew Marc and Trish from their YouTube channel, and gave us a police escort out of town! Lights, siren, the whole deal. It was hilarious and embarrassing. Traffic pulled over and stopped on both sides of road, while 3 nerds in spandex rode their bikes through town!

- This is a great country! The people we met along the way were an inspiration and made me grateful to have been born in the United States of America! Many great stories.

- The power of sincere prayer is real - I don't have a strong faith because I hear voices or have direct conversations with my Creator. I have faith because every time in my life that I have passionately prayed, I have received an answer that defies coincidence.



Front tire in the Gulf of Mexico

- Finally: I believe that one of the greatest challenges facing our country today is fatherless households, or children that desperately need hope for a better future and a positive role model involved in their lives. It is for that reason that the charity I have chosen to support with my bike ride is Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lakeshore. I was hesitant to post this because I appreciate that we all have our own passions - and I cannot expect that others share mine, but several of you have asked, so here it is: www.bbbslakeshore.org/donate

'Most Beautiful Spot on Earth . . .'

Writers were lofty in their praise of Fruitport three quarters of a century ago. Here are some items the well-read citizen might enjoy pondering in 1885:

* * *

Fruitport . . . The most Beautiful Spot on Earth for a Summer Home. Fruitport is a thriving Western Michigan village, located upon one of the most beautiful spots on earth, and in a delightful climate; at the head of Spring Lake, seven miles from Grand Haven. It is populated by a thriving and industrious people and during the summer fairly swarms with summer resorters. It is backed up with a prosperous farming country, heavy forests and beautiful groves. It has the big iron furnaces and other large interests of the Spring Lake Iron Co., J. C. Ford, manager, employing several hundred men, and other smaller manufacturing interests. It has a printing office and stereotyping establishment conducted by Will A. Savidge, that would do credit to any city in the state.

submitted by Jerry Alger