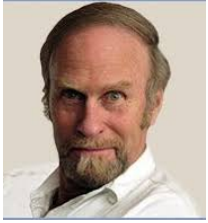


An Amazing Discovery While Pedaling Into Kanab, Utah



By Frosty Wooldridge

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On a bicycle tour, you run into every kind of surprise under the sun. You might meet an old high school classmate. You could discover a lost dog and take her under your wing. A tourist stops you to take a picture of you standing alongside of him. You might see 10,000 birds swirling around a certain spot in an ocean lagoon... in a feeding frenzy.

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(Sandi riding into the
animal sanctuary
"Friends Forever."



At some point, if you're lucky...on the fabled Big Sur, you might discover a mother Gray whale and her calf surface below your vista point...or dolphins surfing the waves...or sea otters playing a game of tag...or loons giving their haunting call in the wilds of Minnesota.

World bicycle touring offers every rider the “Art of Discovery.” Not only of events and happenings around you while you pedal, but discovering yourself...what you’re made of, what enthralls you, what angers you, what saddens you and a host of other emotions. Why is the world so unfair to some and so sickeningly opulent to others? That’s why long distance bicycle touring offers you to enter into the realm of the Art of Discovery.

This spring, Sandi and I cranked our bikes out of Kanab, Utah, which is just north of the Grand Canyon on Route 89. Not far north, we read a sign along the highway: “Best Friends”
Address: 235 S 100 E, Kanab, UT 84741

The logo showed the muzzle of a dog or cat. BestFriends dot org

“Let’s go check this place out,” Sandi said.

“I’m with you, dear,” I said.

We rode the bikes through a canyon surrounded by enormous red-tan rocks with lots of desert cacti and sage brush. It’s pretty hot and dry in that neck of the woods.

At the welcoming center, we saw a lot of dogs, cats, horses, birds and other animals. Indeed, they featured one of world’s largest animal protection areas of 4,100 acres. When we walked in, a number of staff walked up.

Lena said, “Welcome to Best Friends...we have a mission to bring down the 17 million ‘put down’ deaths of cats and dogs 20 years ago in America each year to zero. Last year, we dropped those horrible numbers from 17 million to 625,000 animals in 2020.”

Sandi said, “I had no idea the deaths by injection were THAT high. That’s dreadful.”

I said, “How can we help?”

Lena replied, "We're forming more organizations of "Best Friends" across the country...one in in Denver where you live. Help them out."

I said, "I will with money and a helping hand."

Best Friends across the USA features a "No Kill" of any dogs and cats by 2025.

Later, we pedaled to the largest pet cemetery in the world about a mile or so from the visitor center.

"Holy catfish," I said, as I surveyed the thousands of grave markers for cats and dogs.

"This is almost unbelievable," said Sandi.

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(Friends Forever animal cremation cemetery, Kanab, Utah)

We walked around to see pictures of dogs and cats engraved above their markers. Kind words, painful loss, heartfelt appreciation. Additionally, chimes surrounded the cemetery to give soft music as the breezes wafted through that sacred area.

One of the keepers walked up. "How you two doing?"

"Fine," said Sandi. "We have never seen such a remarkable cemetery."

"Yeah," she said. "We've buried animals from all 50 states in this cemetery. And, we think we've had some 'human animals' remains as to cremations buried right alongside their pets. Those animals were their best friends and they wanted to rest eternally with them. Of course, we can't prove they are human remains, but emotions are powerful between a dog or cat and the owner."

I could relate because I shared life with a Hungarian Komondor for 13 years, and we XC skied, biked, packed and played frisbee together. When he died, the bottom fell out of my world.

That morning, we made yet another "Amazing Discovery" while on cycle tour. We saw the living trying to save the living from extermination by needle. We saw the dead resting with their owners in eternal repose. We promised to become a part of "Best Friends" by doing our part to make pets' lives in America more humane.

As we pedaled back out onto the highway, it dawned on me as to how lucky, how fortunate, and how graced we are to pedaling into the world with curiosity, with creative energy and with a sense of high adventure that can only come from riding a bicycle at the perfect speed...pure eudemonia.

What did our visit show us? Well, we discovered that for all the bad people in the world...there an equal and greater number of good people doing good things. What good things are you doing in the world?

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