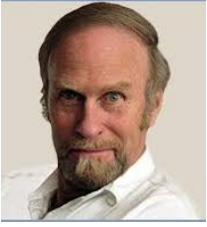


Bicycling Through the Avenue of the Giants



By Frosty Wooldridge

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For every bicycle touring rider that pedals the magnificent wonders of the West Coast, perhaps the most stunning, if not peaceful moment occurs when you enter into the Prairie Creek Redwoods...and later, into the magnificent "Avenue of the Giants" of Northern California on Route 101.

Of all my journeys around the globe on my bicycle, I was not prepared for the sheer magnitude, the deep quiet and heights of those ambassadors from 2,200 years ago. They weigh 120 tons, drink 500 gallons of water a day, spread 25 feet in diameter at their bases, and grow 365 feet into the sky. Nothing on earth matches their sheer elegance of stature, their eternal wonder, and their ability to inspire artists, poets and adventure-seekers.

(Frosty Wooldridge standing among the giants of the Avenue of the Giants.)



Unfortunately, from 1850 to 1917, lumber companies cut down 96 percent of the 2,000,000 acres of redwoods on the California Coast. Less than 300,000 acres remain. Those trees had been growing since the Roman Empire, before Christ, before Hannibal crossed the Alps...just an unimaginable amount of time for any kind of being to continue living. Saved from the lumberjacks' final cut, back in 1917, SavetheRedwoodsLeague.com members led by Charles Kellogg and the Women's League of Northern California—bought all the remaining redwood groves they could afford.

John D. Rockefeller, the oil tycoon spent a week in the redwoods, and immediately gifted the League with \$2,000,000.00. They bought and continue to buy every acre of remaining redwoods from private owners. It's their gift to all of us.

Once Sandi and I turned off Route 101, we climbed for a mile westward toward the Pacific Ocean until we ran smack-dab into a grove of redwoods that continued for about 10 miles until it reached the campgrounds. The road carefully winds through that magnificent grove. You can stop to explore many trails off the main road. At one point, you can pull at least four bikes into the base of one burned out, but still living redwood. Later, "Big Tree" invites you to see its massive base.

Foresters estimated it at around 2,000 years old, 140 tons and 25 feet in diameter at its base.

As you finish the day, the shadows play through the forest floor with the sun peeking in and out of the skyscraper trunks of the trees. Ferns at the base of the trees...and towering wood monarchs rise into the heavens.

When you reach the hiker/biker campgrounds, you will sleep under those monster trees from by-gone eras.

There's something difficult in describing what it means to sleep in the midst of those ambassadors from another time. You will feel peace, quiet, charm, silence of the deep woods, time standing still, the distinct scent of trees renewing themselves during the night while you renew yourself in your tent under their incredible canopy over 300 feet above you.

"Let's do some earthing with this tree," Sandi said. "Let's place our hands on this tree and feel its wonder and wisdom of 2,000 years."

"Don't mind if I do," I said.

We placed our hands on the tree for 15 minutes of "Earthing" where our right hand was like the positive cable of a battery, and we were the battery that absorbed the positive vibrations of the tree, and then, the negative cable of our left arms drained all the negative energy back into the tree which sent it back into the Earth. It's also called "Grounding" and has scientific evidence that it's very good for your body, mind and soul.

The next day, we continued south on Route 101 until we reached the fabled "Avenue of the Giants." It runs about 35 miles through incredible redwood groves along the Eel River. Many rich people buy the groves to save them for perpetuity. Park people place their names on the groves.

"This is going to be marvelous and wonderful," said Sandi as we entered into that sacred road-tunnel winding through those gargantuan trees.

"I'm with you girl," I said. "Riding through these enormous trees, well, we can't pedal slowly enough."

We stopped at the Dyersville Giant in Founder's Grove. A walk around that 365 foot fallen giant becomes a study in sheer wonder of its massive size that you can feel after its 2,200 year lifespan ended. It takes over 20 to 40 years for those trees to fall over after they die, and 100 years for them to decay. Along that time, they spout new trees and all sorts of plant and animal life along their trunk.

We camped at the main campgrounds where we enjoyed pitching our tent right alongside a redwood. We walked over to the Park Service Museum for a fabulous movie of the park, more information on the trees, and www.savetheredwoodsleague.org There are still more acres to buy and preserve forever for future generations. I have the League in my will to help their cause.

In the morning, we talked to many tourists. They marveled at our packed bikes. They marveled that we could make such a long ride from Canada to Mexico on the West Coast.

"On bicycles," one guys said. "You've got to be nuts."

"Happy nuts," said Sandi.

After leaving the Park Museum, we headed south. We passed tree after tree growing right up to the edge of the pavement. I cannot describe my feelings of stupendous joy while riding through that tunnel of giants. I can tell you this though: every cell in my body felt alive, inspired. My eyes filled with glorious wonder. My skin felt like it wanted to become like the redwoods. My nostrils breathed deeply from the well-spring of eternity those trees represented.

Just as we neared the end of the park, a box turtle had made his way halfway across the road. I feared for his life as cars raced 50 mph through the park.

“Let me get this little guy over the road and into the woods,” I told Sandi.

“Make sure he doesn’t get killed,” she said.

I picked him up. He closed his head and feet back into his shell.

“That’s okay little guy,” I said. “We’re going to get you to your destination for this day.”

I placed him well into the woods, pointed toward the Eel River. He should be reasonably safe.

“Sandi, isn’t it totally amazing that these trees stand here alive for 2,000 years, and we’re only here for 75 years, and that turtle even less years?” I said, coming back to my bike.

“No question that Mother Nature works in mysterious ways,” she said.

In the afternoon, we broke out of the Avenue of the Giants to head south on the main Pacific Coast 101 roadway. Trucks, cars, motorcycles and all the usual noise once again became our reality.

But looking back, our feelings, our eyes, our noses, our skin, and our hearing would remember that magnificent ride through beings from another time. Talk about being blessed! You cannot beat bicycling through those ambassadors from long, long ago.

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