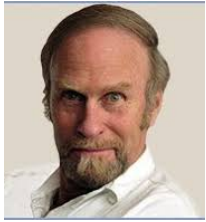


This Valentine's Day: More Wonder, Please



By Frosty Wooldridge

February 14, 2022

For the record, my wife Sandi and I live day to day with a sense of hope and harmony. We exercise, do our jobs, fix dinner, watch movies and contribute to our community in Golden, Colorado. We enjoy friends, go dancing and laugh a lot. We're grateful for all our blessings.

So, instead of a serious column today, please enjoy a bicycle adventure that carries you into the wonders of Nature. We live in a beautiful world. Let's try to preserve it and all the other creatures living in it.

A Bicycle Journey from Mexicali, Mexico to Calgary, Canada

In the spring, Doug and I pedaled from Mexicali, Mexico toward Calgary, Canada to meet Bryan Delay who had bicycled South America with us. We rode up the middle of California, through Oregon and upwards through Washington State. Because of springtime, we watched millions of birds flying over our heads all day long. Wave after wave after wave! Big Canadian geese, lovely white pelicans, cranes, Arctic Terns, mallards, Western grebes, and many more that we couldn't identify.

We rolled our bikes past the Salton Sea in southern California. We cranked through Joshua Tree National Monument with its wondrous boulders. We headed into the southern end of Death Valley at 116 degrees F. on April 1st. That Henry Wade exit proved itself 30 miles of sand and butt-busting cycling.

We packed plenty of water in order to make the pavement of the regular highway through the valley.

Interestingly, when you lay your life on the line, but you're prepared, life meets you. I mean, death could meet you, too. But with intrepid hearts, Doug and I pedaled northward into the heat-tempest of that scorching day. If you ever felt like you had died and gone to the fiery dungeons of Hell, that day would define it.

Along the road, we saw an approaching motorhome creating a dust storm behind its wheels. When it came up to us, the driver stopped. "Do you guys know the temperature?" he asked. "It's 116 degrees."



"We feel it with every push on the pedals," Doug said. "Not our lucky day to be pedaling in this kind of intense heat."

"Here," the wife said, "Two cold pears out of our cooler and two ice cold lemonades."

Monika and Reinhold, a lovely couple from Germany, gave us two gifts in that scorching desert that we remember to this day. We broke open the cans and guzzled the cool liquid that slid down our throats as refreshingly as if we had drunk the water cascading over Niagara Falls. And those two cold pears, well, a five-course dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City could not compare to the joy of those delicious, juicy, life-giving pears.

More wonder, please!

As we cranked our iron steeds into the Sierra Nevada

mountains, one night we stopped by “Lake Almanor” that was named for three sisters, Alice, Martha and Eleanor Gay. As we sat there under a clear, star-lit sky with the sun just touching down over the mountain peaks, the fire burned brightly into the gathering dusk. Overhead, a 50 gaggle of Canadian geese honked their way across the lake before flapping their mighty wings to settle down on still waters. What a racket they made! Within minutes another gaggle of



Western grebes, diving ducks, settled near the geese. Before us, we saw mallards creating V-wakes across the glass-still waters of the lake. Then, the diving ducks began diving for food and popped up to create circles that expanded across the waters. Before us, a mathematical board of triangles, circles and lines cut the lake into sections, much like a protractor and a sextant gone wild.

“Gees,” said Doug. “I can’t imagine how much more intricate and beautiful Nature’s showcase at this moment.”

“I’d say we’re right in the middle of the magnificence of the universe,” I said.

More wonder, please!

Several days later, we reached the General Sherman Sequoia at 2,500 years old, and a whopping 120 tons of wood with a 30-foot diameter base. Standing beneath it, you, a mere human, become less than a speck of sand, a tiny blob of protoplasm. Yet, you share the same energy as that 2,500-year-old tree, and you share a moment in time for your life. That tree drinks 500 gallons of water a day and expires 500 gallons of water. That tree was ‘old’ at the time of the Roman Empire, and today, it’s 25 centuries later, and it’s still growing strong.

To stand at the base of it with our bicycles, well....

More wonder, please!

On that trip with Doug, a man who has bicycled seven continents and ridden through 130 countries, he knows the wonders of the world. He and I have marveled at our stunning moments in the Australian Outback, the fantastic beauties of South America and the sheer magnitude of the history of Europe. Not to mention Asia and the Wall of China on our bicycles. I don't mind sharing with you that I feel incredible gratitude as a small farm boy milking cows in Michigan, to become a journalist and world traveler. I have much to be thankful for as a citizen of the United States. It's why I write with such passion to save our country from endless immigration—which will prove the greatest nightmare for America in the 21st century.

More wonder, please!

As we moved further north, we captured rare moments in Yosemite National Park. We pedaled up that winding road that featured an eight percent incline! Raging white waters poured down the Merced River out of the High Sierra Mountains. Our legs felt like fried bacon after a day of climbing and descending. It's a roller coaster ride, but our minds pushed our bodies into it; our legs obeyed our commands.



Somehow, they eagerly respond to the task. Our lungs heaved and our hearts thrived. We “willed” the spokes to spin via the power of our legs. Around us, Nature thrived with flowers, eagles, bees, hummingbirds and the promise of spring. We headed into Yosemite more than 4,000 feet of elevation gain

while pounding the pedals. Froto and Condor, the names of our two bikes, responded by carrying us upward.

We became aware of every movement because our thighs felt tender with the sensation of living. We pushed on, toward the final ascent into the valley. In front of us a monster of a mountain appeared—El Capitan. Our eyes grew wide. We took a deep breath. Suddenly, we felt only wonder.

Like I said, **More WONDER, Please!** And that's bicycle adventure.

We enjoy a beautiful country; I've seen all of it in its glory; I want to preserve it for future generations. We must take action for the preservation of America. What are you doing for the future of America and your children?

Dough Armstrong, 7 continent world bicycle traveler, with his sidekick Frosty Wooldridge, 6 continent world bicycle traveler; Yes! **Please bring on more WONDER!**

Newest book: **Old Men Bicycling Across America: A Journey Beyond Old Age**, available on Amazon or ph. 1 888 519 5121

Living Your Spectacular Life by Frosty Wooldridge, Amazon or ph. 1 888 519 5121

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