

# Day Rides by Barry

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Well, just as advertised, this past weekend was the perfect start to our riding season. Temperatures are dropping one digit and the mornings are getting cooler. The next 7 months should be excellent riding weather. We recently took my favorite ride in the valley out to Canyon Lake



and Tortilla Flat for breakfast. The 14 mile ride to the lake from Apache Junction is really a nice ride. But the jewel of the ride is the part that not too many actually take. It is not very well known that the road is paved another 6 miles past Tortilla Flat, and that is some of the most beautiful part of the entire ride. And if you are really looking for some adventure, take the dirt road another 4 miles for some really incredible scenery through Fish Creek. Just take Hwy. 88 East of Apache Junction 20 miles to the end of the pavement for the best route in the Valley area.

Of course, with any ride you take, there are some potential hazards. With this particular ride, it is not rough roads, speeding 18 wheelers or slick "Tar Snakes". It is worse than that. When you leave the Canyon Lake area there are 3 things you definitely do not want to be behind. In order of most desirable to least these are; a Boat, a Motorhome and an "Out of State Tourist" in a large American car. That's right, the "Out of State Tourist" in a Cadillac is one of the worst possible situations you can be behind on a 14 mile road full of twisties and no passing zones. At least the guy pulling the boat has a clue. Whenever I leave Tortilla Flat I always try and time the departure so that there are no visible encumbrances in front of me. That wasn't the case this day. We drew the worst card possible. Just as we were ready to leave, I see a group of 4 senior citizens getting into a Sedan DeVille with Illinois plates for what was to be their leisurely drive back to Apache Junction. We were not able to get in front, so we were

destined to follow them the entire way.

Having been behind this kind of scenario before, I had a sinking feeling about what was to come. My only hope was that he had not stopped at the overlook on the way down and would take one more peek at the lake on his way out. After only 2 miles, my worst suspicions had already come true. Our friends from the "Land of Lincoln" were determined to see every cactus individually on their 14 mile drive back to Apache Junction. Don't they know that those 10 mph corners are a suggested speed? There is not photo radar in those hills. After 6 miles of watching this guy negotiate these curves, I was betting that not only is he FROM the Land of Lincoln, he probably VOTED for Lincoln. I wouldn't deny anyone the opportunity to take in the scenery, but based upon the 12 cars, 3 boats and 14 motorcycles lined up bumper to bumper behind him, I'm guessing he might have been taking in a little more than his fair share of time.

So after 12 miles, 285 gear changes, 300 taps on the brakes and a dozen rubber band effects we were thoroughly exhausted. The good news was we had FINALLY reached the passing zone and speeds of more than 20 mph. We were now able to put good ole' Abe in OUR rear view mirror and hope to never see him again on winding roads. Our leisurely 20 minute ride from the lake had turned into a 40 minute lesson on slow riding, the use of the clutch and brakes and the exercising of patience. But all turned out good. Aside from being a little frustrated and worn out, I am now able to crush an unopened beer can with the strength I gained in my left hand from pulling in the clutch.

My suggestion is, if you see that you are going to be behind tourists in a large American car that haven't seen a cactus in 20 years, go back into Tortilla Flat and order up another Sarsaparilla. You will be glad you did. Go to [www.cyclerides.com](http://www.cyclerides.com) for the Tortilla Flat Day Ride and over 20 others around the State.

