

# GEEZERS GO ON “OKIES DO UPNORTH” TOUR - JULY 25-29, 2011

SUBMITTED BY FRED KAMP

## MICHIGAN



For their spring 2011 Geezers Tour, the Geezers latched onto an invitation to go on the “Okies Do UpNorth” tour. The UpNorth tour was organized by Leann Burger. When she lived in Pryor, Leann was heavily involved in bicycling in the Claremore/Pryor area. She had also participated in the Cannon’s OBS Grand Tour in Wisconsin and the Geezer’s Tour of the Missouri Katy Trail. Her husband, Roger became associated with the Manistee, Michigan power company, and they moved to nearby Onekama (O-nek – ama). This area is in the North Woods and on the Michigan west coast.

Leann was struck with the scenic beauty of the area and potential for bicycling opportunities. They issued invitations to the tour to bicycling groups with which they had been associated. Janice Whittaker coordinated the Claremore/Pryor and environs area, called the Claremore Group (CLMR). Fred Kamp, having access to both the OBS and the Geezers group, coordinated the Oklahoma City and en-

viron area, called the Oklahoma City Group (OKCY). Janice and Fred agreed that their jobs were like herding cats. There was good cooperation between the groups. Janice provided transportation for Jana Johnston when her ride had to bail at the last minute for medical reasons. Fred provided ride maps and cue sheets to each group.

Those participating in the tour were: Gary and Suzanne Cannon (OKCY), Steve and Sheri Hill (CLMR), Karen Jensen (CLMR), Jane Johansson (CLMR), Jana Johnston (OKCY), Fred and Bonnie Kamp (OKCY), Craig and Ellen LaGrone (CLMR), Cary McKaughan (CLMR), Fenton and Linda Ramey (OKCY), Ken and Jeannie Seidel (CLMR), Larry and Margaret Ann Thompson (CLMR), Janice Whittaker (CLMR), and David Wilkinson (CLMR). Twenty folks.

Leann’s Tour organizing was awesome. There was the equivalent of a mini-tourbook for each of the five days of the tour. They discussed the route, points of interest,

# GEEZERS GO ON "OKIES DO UPNORTH" TOUR, PG.2

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## OKIES DO UPNORTH: Ride Synopsis

**DAY 1.** Onekama to Manistee and Sundling Park and retrace.. 33 Miles..

Highway M-22 , Crescent Beach Road, and Lakeshore Drive. Bar Lake Beach, Lake Bluff Audubon Center, Orchard Beach State Park, 1<sup>st</sup> St Beach and Lighthouse, Sundling Park/Magoon Creek.

**DAY 2.** Onekama west to Portage Point, north to Arcadia, east, then south to Bear Lake Village, then south and west around Bear Lake, then south to Onekama.. 35 miles.

Portage Point Beach, Andy's Beach, Northpoint Park, Pierpoint Beach, Old Facefull Spring

**DAY 3.** Drive to Frankfort 23 miles. Counter clock wise around Crystal Lake, 26 miles. Through Elberta, and Beulah.. Betsie Valley Trail from Frankfort to Beulah. (6.2 miles paved, 3 miles gravel). Arcadia Bluffs, Point Betsie Lighthouse.

**DAY 4.** Drive to Empire 37 miles. Pay to enter Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Go around Glen Lake. Start northeast on Leelanau Highway (M-22), then north on M-109 to Glen Haven, then east to Glen Arbor, then south on M-22, then southeast on MacFarlane Rd., then east on M-675, which will go around the east part of the lake CCW, then M-22 southwest to Empire. This is the "figure 8" route. 31 miles. Dune Climb, Maritime Museum, Inspiration Point, Pierce Stocking Trail.

**DAY 5.** Drive to Traverse City, 25 miles from Empire, or 55 miles from Onekama. Ride east and west shore line of Old Mission Peninsula, 40 miles. From High School go east on Eastern, north on Birchwood/Shore Rd., north on M-37 (Center), north on Bluff Rd., north on Boursaw,/Smokey Hollow, north on Mission, west on Swaney, north on M-37, to Old Mission Light House. From Light House go south on M-37, west and then south on Kroupa, east on Ah-Ta-Wanta Rd., west then south on Peninsula Dr. and east on Eastern to High School.



Day	High	Low
Onkama	52°	
WEDNESDAY	81°	73°
THURSDAY	85°	66°
FRIDAY	86°	64°
SATURDAY	84°	67°
SUNDAY	83°	67°
MONDAY	81°	65°



# GEEZERS GO ON “OKIES DO UPNORTH” TOUR, PG.3

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places to eat, etc. Leann rode point each day and Roger rode sweep. She arranged for local bike club members to help escort us.

The Burgers sure spread the word that we were coming. There were articles in the paper, cook outs in the park with a jazz group playing, and friendly greetings almost everywhere. We were impressed with the people, the scenic beauty, and the contrast with the 100+ degree temperatures being experienced back in Oklahoma.

Leann and Roger hosted a pre-tour happy hour and dinner, and a post-tour dessert. At the post-tour dessert we learned that Suzanne Cannon had been appointed Morals Director, and she handed out individual certificates reflecting her observations. The Geezers explained (or thought they did) that while there was no formal tie between the OBS and the Geezers, there were usually enough OBS members on a Geezer tour that a report was submitted to the OBS Pathfinder newsletter.

## OKIES DO UPNORTH- DAILY RIDE ACCOUNTS

*(With 20 participants, it would be difficult for each to know what the others were experiencing. To get a cross-section snapshot, five “volunteers” were selected to give a description of their experiences on one of the five riding days.)*

### DAY ONE – July 25:

Onekama to Manistee & Points South, 33 miles

#### Description by Margaret Ann Thompson

It was a bright and sunny day with moderate wind. We left Onekama (rhymes with “O heckava”) at 9 am in a leisurely procession. Our first stop was the art studio of Les Scrugs where we watched wood carvers in action and viewed

some terrific modern wood sculpture. Proceeding on toward Manistee, we traversed deep woods with occasional views of Lake Michigan. We encountered a few hills but nothing too difficult for our intrepid group. In Manistee, we took a trolley tour where we visited local beaches and the Coast Guard Station and saw wildlife and points of interest. Next was a leisurely lunch at the River Street Station, then on to the Sundling Park / Magoon Creek Nature Area where we visited a beautiful beach where most of our adventurous members enjoyed the sand and some enjoyed Lake Michigan’s clear water. We then returned to Onekama on the same route with the same hills which had somehow gotten higher on our return than they had been in the morning.



This was a very satisfying ride with great scenery, moderate traffic, friendly people, and fantastic food. We followed it up with a barbeque dinner in the park at Onekama provided by the local folks and a jazz concert at sundown. It was a great way to start our tour.

**DAY TWO:** Onekama to Arcadia and Bear Lake Loop Ride south to Portage Point, north to Arcadia and loop back to Onekama, 35 miles.

#### Description by Jane Johansson:

## GEEZERS GO ON “OKIES DO UPNORTH” TOUR, PG.4

“When you leave Onekama, you’ll bicycle up a really long hill of about two miles. It’s not that bad because the grade isn’t all that steep. It’s more of a gradual climb.” Leann Burger’s phrase really long hill worried me for 24 hours before our ride today. The day started out mildly enough with an easy ride to some beaches in the Onekama area, but the scenery was difficult to enjoy knowing what lay ahead. The moment of doom finally arrived, and I found myself swinging around a corner and heading north on M-22. Yes, it was a really, really, long hill, but I’m happy to say that I never stopped on the hill. I distracted myself by admiring Gary Cannon’s assault on the hill and his quick descent on the downward slope. After successfully negotiating the World’s Longest Hill, I rested for a moment and then joined Roger Burger on the ride into Arcadia. Roger pleasantly pointed out cherry orchards and various other sites along the road. Also, he did not insist on any side trips but guided me directly to the Rigger’s Restaurant. Famished from my successful ascent of Mount Everest, I entered the restaurant; within about twenty minutes, the lone waitress was swamped by bicyclists from Oklahoma plus many locals. Sensing a culinary emergency, Suzanne Cannon volunteered as a waitress and proved amazingly adept at taking orders and using some sort of push-button drink contraption. A career in the restaurant business is hers if she cares to accept it. Following a restoration to health, I joined a group of cyclists who headed east of Arcadia and then south around Bear Lake. Along the way I passed two boys carrying fishing poles—they had watched several cyclists go by and they asked “is this a race?” They seemed concerned that I was so far behind... By the shores of Bear Lake, Cary McKaugan exhibited his navigational skills by explaining to me the route back into Onekama. I followed his instructions precisely and had no trouble returning to Onekama. Interestingly, Cary missed a turn and took a somewhat different route.

The day was delightfully cool with a high temperature of about 74 degrees, but there was a rather strong north wind for much of the day. Another 35 miles has been added to my log book!

**DAY 3:** SAG up the coast to Frankfort and ride a 27 mile loop around Crystal Lake with lunch in Beulah.

**Description by Ken Seidel (who mysteriously omits lunch in Beulah).**

We began at 9:00 a.m. at the Onekama Village Park with



bikes loaded on our vehicles. Drove to the starting place for that day which was Frankfort, 20 mi North of Onekama on Highway M-22. We first stopped on a high bluff to view Lake Mich. Nice view spot but view limited due to weather for that day. Rode on bike paths and hard-packed dirt trails for about 15 of the 30-mile route. Mostly flat with little traffic and about 25 degrees cooler than OK. The ride was around a beautiful lake called Crystal Lake. The trees and lake shoreline made the ride very enjoyable. Many parts were like riding in a forest. The last part of the ride was along the Lake Mich. Shoreline which looks much more like an ocean than a lake. Visited the Point Betsie Lighthouse and played at the beach. They like to look for and gather

# GEEZERS GO ON “OKIES DO UPNORTH” TOUR, PG.5

SUBMITTED BY FRED KAMP

beach glass along Lake Mich. shores like people on the West Coast gather driftwood. The beach glass has been smoothed by rolling in the sand caused by the waves. The weather brightened up in the afternoon, so the lake was a wonderful blue.

Had lunch in Frankfort, visited a nice bookstore and consumed too much ice cream!! Our ride leader, Leann, had done another wonderful job of planning and guiding us. She told us of our options, made suggestions, prepared us for what to expect and previewed Fred's map for the day with us. She was very helpful and a joy to be around. A great day to ride and a great place to ride.....

**Day 4:** SAG to Empire and ride through Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore with a figure 8 route around Glen Lake, 31 miles.

**By Jana Johnston**

We started the day with a foggy drive to Empire to start our ride. After a brief visit to the visitor's center, we started off in fog/mist for the first few miles of a figure 8 ride around the Glen Lake area. Most of us looped around the lakes stopping at Glen Haven to look at the old fishing village and

Cherry Republic in Glen Arbor for lunch. After lunch, we did the rest of the figure-eight loop around the lake to take the gentler side up a long hill. The reward was going

to be ice cream at Cherry Republic back in Glen Arbor (it

was a fantastic chocolate lover's delight). From there we had an uneventful return to Empire. We then drove to some of the lookouts and took the Pierce Stocking Scenic (as in up to 24% grade hills) loop. Five adventurous riders rode this loop! Congrats to all of them. One of the overlooks we stopped at was a 400 ft high sand dune in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. We watched dozens of people climb this dune. Leann mentioned that if you got to the bottom of the dune and could not climb back up, it could cost you 7 to 8 grand to be rescued! There is a large sign at the top of the dune telling people it is dangerous and to stay off of it.

**DAY 5:** SAG to Traverse City and ride both coasts of Old Mission Peninsula Loop, 40 miles.

**By Ellen LaGrone**

The day started with all riders rendezvousing at Central High School in Traverse City at 9:30. Some came up from Onekama and others, like Craig and I, stayed Thursday night at Lakeshore Inn in Empire and sagged just 25 miles to Traverse City. Soon we were headed up the east side of the Old Mission Peninsula that bisects Grand Traverse Bay. Less traffic going counterclockwise around the peninsula, Leann told us, and she promised mostly flat going north and south, with hills to contend with if we shortcut across the peninsula. And so it went, 20 miles up the east side along the shore, dazzling blue water on the right and beautiful homes, landscaped with bright flowers and hostas, all along the left. The two-toned turquoise and light-blue water looked like the Caribbean, but with wooden docks and their boats way out in the shallow water, and Adirondack chairs at water's edge. It was easy riding and one by one we passed up the shortcut roads on our left. These Pokey Okies were determined to finish strong (all 40 miles). Three miles



# GEEZERS GO ON “OKIES DO UPNORTH” TOUR, PG.6

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or so before the tip of the peninsula we turned west to Center Road which leads to the beautiful old (decommissioned) lighthouse sitting astride the 45th parallel (the ideal climate for growing varietal grapes, they say). There we caught up with Leann, Gary McKaughan and a few others. The lighthouse keepers, a friendly couple from Dallas, pointed out the real lighthouse (a stubby white electric beacon) out in the shallow rocky water just to the west. The low-tide look of the water, they said, was due in part to decreasing amounts of snowmelt. For a small fee we could have toured the upper floor of the lighthouse, but determined to make it down the west side in time for lunch with at least some of our group, we pressed on. But not before I had a quick peek at the furnished Hessler log cabin built by Michigan pioneers in 1856 from huge square-cut pine logs. Now it was back down Center Road for about six miles through rows and rows of cherry trees, and at least one field (beeryard?) of hops climbing up their skinny trestles. Despite the desire to get to the Jolly Pumpkin in time, I had to stop and get one more box of cherries and a bottle of maple syrup before the roadside stands disappeared. Then west across the narrow peninsula on Kroupa Road (some hills) and just a few miles south to Bowers Harbor on the west side of the peninsula and our long-awaited lunch. Most of the group at the Jolly Pumpkin were about finished eating, but we relaxed with Larry and Margaret Ann Thompson over a fine lunch on the terrace. (In the ladies room, in my bike shorts, I encountered a bride and two bridesmaids, readying themselves for the wedding to be held soon on the lawn.) Back on the road, the four of us rode down the west side, encountering a little more traffic, now with azure water and beckoning beaches on the right and pretty summer and year-round homes on the left. The day was warmer than earlier days, and the public beaches at the end of the ride in Traverse City made us wish we'd brought our bathing suits. Leann's tour had already accomplished its mission in four days. We were already in serious like with northwestern



Michigan and after this day, it was head-over-heels love. And we hadn't even been to one of the peninsula's wineries or bed-and-breakfasts or beaches or the old log church Presbyterian mission on the east side that gave the peninsula its name.

**Next time!**

IMAGES BY FRED KAMP AND GARY MCKAUGHAN

