

Northern Ontario's Roadside Attractions

A Perfect Recipe for Time-Crunched Adventure Seeking Enthusiasts



When friends Dawn Larsen and Greg Powell paired their passion for adventure with their love for motorcycling into a time-crunched vacation schedule ...it resulted in a fun-packed weekend tour of Northern Ontario's community roadside attractions.



Greg Powell, had just recently moved to Sudbury, Ontario to take on an intern position as Mine Controller for First Nickel and hadn't had the opportunity to travel much through Northern Ontario. His friend Dawn Larsen, who owns Navigator Marketing was having her company's busiest year ever with no opportunity for vacation. The pair lamented over dinner at a restaurant one night that they'd like to do something memorable during the summer but equipped with only their busy work schedules, their burning sense of adventure, a desire to travel and their imaginations they decided that a motorcycle trip through Northern Ontario visiting all the community roadside attractions might be the answer.

Powell and his Honda Veradaro are no newbies to motorcycle travel. Powell travelled 10 months across the globe from Alaska to Argentina in 2011. "I was fortunate to see some of the world's most beautiful scenery from the mountains of Alaska to the penguins in Argentina," comments Powell. You can read more on his adventures on his blog (www.gregsadventure.com). Powell searched the internet for travel ideas and soon came across a website that identified memorable roadside attractions all over Canada

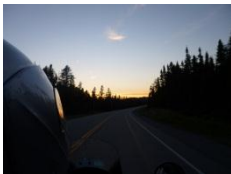


(<http://www.roadsideattractions.ca/ontario.htm>). Powell had also read that some tourists brought a tour mascot with them to include in their photos – like the Travelocity gnome so the pair decided to include Eor, the Disney character in all their travel photos as their travel mascot. The pair discussed the trip opportunity and they quickly solidified a plan for two weekends out. Powell mapped out a travel plan using google maps and the (<http://www.roadsideattractions.ca/ontario.htm>) website. The trip left Sudbury, Ontario on a Friday evening travelling to Marten River then finishing day one in New Liskeard. Day two had the pair leaving New Liskeard and travelling to Hearst. Day three started early Sunday morning from Hearst, through Hornepayne, White River, Sault Ste. Marie all the way back to Sudbury and the big Nickel roadside attraction.

As the excitement built for the trip, Larsen posted the pair's travel plans on facebook and received overwhelming response back from facebook friends. "I was quite surprised that so many people were really interested in our trip and talked of doing something similar but never actually did it," says Larsen. "We both thought the trip was exciting for us but that it might seem kind of cheesy to others, but that wasn't the case," says Larsen. "Many people asked me to share our roadmap after our trip was done."



When the weekend arrived for the motorcycle trip through Northern Ontario – the pair overcame oil pan repairs and time delays to finally roll out of Sudbury to start their motorcycle adventure. Their first stop; a large bass in Marten River.



"It was great travelling with Greg because he is such a seasoned traveller and really has seen some of the world's most dangerous road conditions. So I knew I was in good hands," says Larsen

"When we finally arrived in Cobalt, it was too dark to take photos of the Tug Boat and the rail cars, so we headed into New Liskeard and back tracked to Cobalt in the morning to take our photos once again," says Powell. "There were some breathtaking moments along the trip," says Larsen.

"The awesome scents of nature and awesome sunsets we experienced as we travelled along the highway were so memorable," says Larsen



"We were fortunate to see a Sandhill Crane in just outside of Opatatika "walked across the highway and we doubled back to get into a position to take some great photos," says Powell



Northern Ontario has some hidden gems of communities with some great character and roadside attractions. Dawn's favourite was Opatatika and the Pickerel statue. "I had never heard of that community. It was quaint and you could tell they had pride in their community. Honorable mention went to the skidoo tree in Val Gagne "I liked how it used imagination," says Larsen. Greg's favourite was the animal scene of moose and wolves in Hearst. Honorable mention went to the Rainbow trout in Sault Saint Marie. "I really enjoyed



meeting the people from each community. Everyone was friendly and had a story to share," says Powell.



"We asked people to take our picture at most roadside attractions and we'd tell them what we were doing. They all obliged and seemed so intrigued with our trip, asked a few questions and shared some of their travel stories with us."



When the pair reached Earleton, they drove in a heavy rain and lightning storm. "I'm really sure that the people who make rainsuits have never tried to put their product on in a rainstorm," says Larsen. "It felt like I was neither graceful nor dry in the end of it all."



Eor the travel mascot seemed most at home in White River next to Winnie the Pooh. After each photo, Greg secured Eor back into one of the steel panniers attached to the motorcycle. Somewhere between White River and Wawa, Eor must have popped the trip box lid and escaped



because when the pair got to Wawa both Eor and the pannier lid were gone, never to be found. "We joked that Eor popped the lid to stay behind with Winnie the Pooh in White River," jokes Larsen

“The highway from Hornepayne to White River was the pair’s favourite piece of highway because of the scenery, winding and hilled highway. “The waterways on the way to Sault Ste. Marie was some of the best scenery I have experienced,” says Powell



“It was a great moment when a family came up to us in Wawa when they saw Greg’s bike sticker from Columbia. The young father and mother were from Columbia and shared with Greg their goal of getting back to their country again and their kids kept telling us about how excited they were to travel to Winnipeg.”



After White River, it seemed like a competition for us to find more roadside attractions that weren’t on our list – bonus attractions if you will,” says Larsen. “I think we found an extra six attractions.” “We found a 30 foot T-Rex dinosaur in someone’s yard in Mattice “ says Powell. We knocked on their door to ask permission but they weren’t there, so we sneaked over and took our photos on the T-Rex’s tail,” says Larsen.

“There were a few roadside attractions we couldn’t find as hard as we tried especially in Sault Ste. Marie” says Powell. “It was funny when we went into a community and we’d ask some locals for directions to their roadside attractions, some didn’t know they had one,” says Powell



The pair travelled 1,698 km through 48 communities, took pictures at 57 roadside attractions while spending 23 hours on the motorcycle over 3 days while getting on and off the bike no less than 106 times for photo opps and rest breaks. The tour ended back in Sudbury at the Big Nickel at 10 p.m. Sunday evening.

“The entire trip was so memorable from the outstanding scenery, to experiencing scents of nature, the wind against your face to the fun laughing and joking of getting on and off and on and off the bike so often to celebrating our successes of finding bonus attractions. It just was a fun and memorable trip,” says Larsen. “I highly recommend it.”

“The Northern Ontario roadside attraction trip really met all our expectations to get a trip in by motorcycle, experience nature and the outdoors, have some adventure and a lot of fun along the way in a very short time frame,” says Larsen

Powell has moved back to Toronto into his new role as C.F.O of Shear Diamond Corporation and Larsen went back to working long days at her business in Sudbury. “We are looking forward to doing a bike trip in this fall to experience the spectacular fall colours, the fall smells and the crisp air that accompanies them,” says the pair

For more information & roadside attraction stories:

Contact: Dawn Larsen,- 705.918.2090 dlarsen@persona.ca

Greg Powell ,- 239.423.4222 mustgo2011@yahoo.ca

To download pictures go to www.gregsadventure.com/mediapics