

Well, Day 1 has provided some interesting experiences for our furry friends. Last year, Teddy was the “old hand” on the RAGBRAI – he relished his role in showing Freddie the ropes – bike seat belts, helmets, raincoats, camping (tent and all), how to “do” a photo op. He even mentored Freddie in the finer points of being the object of many and varied comments by all sorts of those strange “two-legged’s” on those really strange contraptions – at one point sharing with Freddie how odd all of those machines seemed, which carried only one two-legged. If those two-legged’s are going to try to stay upright on those two-wheeled devices, then does it not make sense to use a bigger version of these cycling machines – so they can transport more of us??? It was a rather unusual compliment for the Blue Shadow (“Blue”) – Teddy’s two-leggeds’ much bigger tandem bike. Now if one is going to cast one’s lot with one of those two-wheeled things, one could do a lot worse than what his two-leggeds call “Blue”. Teddy coached Freddie on all sorts of safety issues, including the importance of staying out of the way of all sorts of two-leggeds’ equipment. But Teddy had also learned that great danger lurked – unseen – around a corner, over the edge of a steep embankment/ditch – in the form of BIG deer who most typically make their appearance at dusk or dawn – and who do not have a good eye for little furry friends. OH !! – Teddy was a veritable treasure-trove of important knowledge – which he dispensed to his new friend freely and liberally.

But Teddy’s work of 2020 is now different from that of a year ago. He recognizes that he and Freddie are truly in this together. Neither of them holds the cards – they will experience this year’s adventures together. There will not be camping. There will not be frequent stops in small towns to check out the HUGE tractors and the lemonade, or stops on the road to once again join in the annual ritual of determining the best strawberry-rhubarb pie and/or the best ice cream in the state of Iowa. No, these will not be part of this year’s travels. But the little fellows have overheard their two-leggeds talking about other things that sound intriguing. And so – they are ready to go when the morning of Day 1 arrives. Life is one big adventure !...

Finally the day of the first ride. Now that the odyssey is starting in earnest, it is time to suit up with the proper protective equipment – that is – put the helmets on.



### **Today's route i**

Starting from home, the route will take us through Chatfield State Park to Arrowhead Golf Course. From there, we go past Waterton Canyon (which is currently closed) to the Audubon Center at the corner of Waterton Canyon Road and Highway 121. From there, we go back through Chatfield State Park to get on the C470 Trail. We travel west and north on the trail to arrive at Morrison Road and C470. The C470 trail then goes north past Bandimere Speedway to Alameda Parkway. We follow the Parkway west and arrive at the Dinosaur Ridge Visitor Center. Then, there is another climb up Dinosaur Ridge Road past the dinosaur tracks. The next part of the journey is entry into Red Rocks Amphitheater Park, and from the exit of Red Rocks Park, the return to Morrison is followed by entry onto the Bear Creek Trail through Bear Lake Park. We stay on the trail all the way to the Platte River Trail/Mary Carter Greenway Trail, which takes us back home.

Departure from home carries with it just a few light butterflies – which disappear quickly as Ken and Teddy and Freddie and Judith all rapidly settle into their positions and roles. Approximately 1 mile from home, we enter the Mary Carter Greenway Trail, heading south toward C-470 and Chatfield State Park. This is a

lovely ride – beautiful mountain vistas, small lakes, well-maintained trail shared by hikers/walkers and cyclists (no motorized vehicles).

We enter the Trail at mile marker 12.5 and exit at mm16 – exactly five (5) miles from home. As we leave the Greenway Trail, we enter Chatfield State Park and wend our way up and over the dam. Teddy and Freddie note that a large portion of this route was covered on one of their training rides, so Teddy and Freddie have already shown you Chatfield Lake. We follow the Chatfield Park Road halfway around Chatfield Lake and depart the Park at the southeast entrance/exit, headed south on Roxborough Park Road. We had thought to stay going south on that road – until we saw huge clouds of dust being thrown up by massive dirt- and debris- hauling construction trucks. The road was not paved! It was an easy decision to turn right on Titan Road and proceed west until Titan Road turns 90 degrees left, becomes Rampart Range Road which goes straight south to Roxborough. It is actually rather simple – save for the three monster hill climbs that have to be performed – in order to reach the REAL climb – up into Arrowhead Golf Club. The percent grade of the climb into Arrowhead is staggering, even though short – in excess of 11% over a distance of 900 feet But truth be told, the whole area is beautiful – stunningly so. Teddy and Freddie had also shown you the view down the first fairway at Arrowhead Golf Course. However, this is the third time we have ascended that hill – not certain that we need to do that very many more times!!

Teddy and Freddie have their diet Cokes on the patio again, in the presence of some sprinkles of rain.





Following a rest/liquids break at the clubhouse patio (social distancing!!), we then make our way DOWN the hill – very carefully, given the STOP and 90-degree right turn (only) at the base of the hill!! We exit the Golf Club and retrace some of our path – staying on Rampart Range Road. We then exit onto Waterton Canyon Road, which we follow until we reach the Audubon Gardens, located at the intersection of SH 121 (Wadsworth Blvd) and Waterton Canyon Road – across the road from the entrance to Lockheed Martin. There is not much to see, as the Audubon facility – like most public facilities – will be closed until?? At the Audubon Center, Teddy and Freddie climb up on the sign for a photo-op to prove they are here !



Departing the Audubon gardens, we pedal north on SH 121 until reaching the west main entrance to Chatfield State Park. Once inside the Park, we pedal to the tunnel under C-470, climb up a couple of steep, short hills and then take a short water break before starting the next leg of the day's journey. The hills of C-470 between Wadsworth Blvd and Alameda Avenue are long – and require some serious determination to simply keep turning the pedals. It is a very challenging 13 miles.

The C-470 trail has intersections with Kipling Parkway, Ken Caryl Ave, Bowles Ave, Belleview Ave and Quincy Ave. As we ride north, we begin to see a significant thunderstorm developing. First there are lightning strikes to the west, on the west side of the Hogback. That is not too worrisome as they are on the other side of the Hogback, right? Then there are lightning strikes to the east of us about a mile away. Oops. Finally, there is cloud-to-cloud lightning directly overhead. Uh oh. We have been bracketed and now can be hit as the target. The bear and the horse are ruining the fact that they have forgotten to bring their rain gear. As it is clearly increasingly dangerous, we decide to turn Blue east at Belleview Ave and then turn right into the Progress Retail Center. One set of stores in one of the strips has canvas awnings that project 3 feet from the building. Fortunately the awning is on the south side of the building, thus giving us additional shelter from the storm coming in from the northwest. We are tucked into the protected space just as the rain begins – probably a 15-20 minute shower that is varied in its intensity. Teddy and Freddie “weather” the storm quite nicely.

Teddy and Freddie watch the storm from the safety of the back of the bench.



As is usually the case with summer afternoon thunderstorms on the eastern side of the Front Range – the storm comes quickly, does its work quickly, and departs quickly. We have an approximately 25-minute delay. Teddy and Freddie inspect the cloud formations to see if it is wise to continue on to Morrison and then to Dinosaur Ridge. The storm is long past; it is now a beautiful – although quite windy – afternoon. So we re-enter the bike path toward Morrison. The C470 bike



path passes through the west edge of Bear Lake Park. At Quincy Ave, just before the C470 trail entrance to the park, there is a Circle K. In the spirit of RAGBRAI and Beekman's Ice Cream, Teddy and Freddie decide to get Ice Cream Sandwiches. They agree that there is no comparison to Beekman's. Oh well, calories are calories, and they need to stock up for the Dinosaur Ridge climb.



Our next goal is to continue north past Morrison until we reach Alameda Ave, then follow Alameda as it climbs Dinosaur Ridge.

From the Circle K, we enter Bear Lake Park, (which makes Teddy more comfortable !) and cycle past the campground that has 2 Yurts. From there we pedal past the swimming beach at the Big Soda Lake, to the intersection of the park road with Kumpfmiller Drive. Turning west, we exit the park, staying on the C470 Bikeway, passing under C470 and crossing Morrison Road. The C470 bike path is then on Rooney Road for a quarter mile, before splitting off to the bikeway again. At this point, we consult and decide not to go to Bandimere Speedway. The decision to skip Bandimere is made in real-time, as all of a sudden we find ourselves facing really strong headwinds - blowing at 25 – 30 mph with gusts to 40. We struggle to maintain a 6 – 7 mph pace for the 5.2 miles up to Alameda



Parkway. At one point, of a sudden the wind stops blowing, and then a gust comes at us from the left side with a force that nearly tips us over. We finally make it to Alameda Parkway, crossing over C470 using the bridge. The winds are now from our right, and we are being pelted with blown sand and pebbles. We make our way to the Dinosaur Ridge Main Visitor Center. At the Information Booth/Ticket Sales kiosk, we meet a young woman who is utterly fascinated by Blue – lots of questions. It is always fun to talk about our tandem! So, while we are talking to the young woman, Teddy and Freddie dismount and go off to explore the Dinosaurs. The colorful one is their favorite!







They also like the big grey one. Most of the dinosaurs are wearing face masks!



Teddy and Freddie really like the big feet of their dinosaur friend. Little do they know that they are about to be able to sit in a fossilized footprint.





Unfortunately, there is not time to tour the museum, so Teddy and Freddie mount up and we head up the 7% grade climb to the site of the dinosaur tracks. The first tracks that they see are bird-foot like with three toes.



There are a lot of the tracks, like a whole herd went through.





Then there is a track from a really big round foot. Could it be from our Friend back at the Visitors' Center? Looks a little bigger than his foot.



When we arrive at the top of the climb up Dinosaur Ridge, there is an overlook to the East. At the overlook, the vista eastward gives a spectacular view of the Eastern Plains, as well as looking nearly straight down the Bandimere Speedway Drag racetrack.



We climb back onto Blue and head carefully down the steep backside of Dinosaur Ridge. Then it is on to Red Rocks Amphitheater Park. We continue along Alameda Parkway until we get to Trading Post Road. The Alameda Parkway to the Upper North parking lot is blocked off, making us take Trading Post Road. We follow Trading Post Road until we get to the Trading Post. Access to Ship Rock Road and the Amphitheater is blocked off, as are the entrances to the hiking trails that would lead to the Amphitheater.





Now the sign really does not seem to apply to Bears and Horses – so should we go on? Alas, Teddy's and Freddie's dreams of being Center Stage at Red Rocks are thwarted, as they would have to haul the two legged's along.

So, mounting up again, we head down Red Rocks Park Road to Hog Back Road. Going down Hog Back Road is an exhilarating descent into Morrison, hitting 38 mph even though we are keeping the speed down – “exhilarating”?? We pick up the Bear Creek Trail across from the Morrison Inn, and enjoy an uneventful ride back to Mary Carter Greenway Trail, (of course, up and) over the Bear Lake Dam and past Fox Hollow Golf Course, heading toward home. Exiting the Trail at the intersection of Prince Street and Santa Fe Drive, we ride through downtown Littleton – oops, right by The Inside Scoop!! But all is not lost, as Blue rather automatically deposits us at the front door of one of the best ice cream shops ever! So, one last stop, and then home. Pictures of Inside Scoop Ice Cream to follow..

This was a nice start for our seven-day series.

We will look forward to next week's ride – hope you can join us !!