

# Searching for Buddy Holly

By Neil King, Boerne, Reader Submission

“What are you looking for,” I asked Pam, my wife, when I saw that she was on Google.

“I’m searching for Buddy Holly,” she answered.

“Oh... I think he’s dead. I believe he died in a plane crash along with Richie Valens and The Big Bopper.”

“Not the real Buddy Holly. I’m looking for a picture of the Buddy Holly Memorial Statue. Our back-to-school theme is going to be “Rockin’ & Rollin’ into a new year.” I need the picture for a power point presentation.”

Pam and I are both educators. We were just barely out for the summer and she was already preparing for a back to school presentation. Within seconds, up pops a picture of the statue. “Lubbock, Texas,” I read aloud.

Now I’m always looking for an excuse for a road trip so I said, “Our daughter lives in Lubbock. That’s only 400 miles away. Let’s just hop up there and take a picture in person.”

“It’ll be an expensive photo,” Pam said. But, loving to ride as much as I do, she said “let’s go!”

“I’ll go service the motorcycles,” I said, “Which bike do you want to take?”

Pam chose to take her Honda Shadow because of its light weight and ease in handling. I decided on my Honda ST1100 because of the smooth ride with its V4 engine and Corbin seat. With 66,000 miles on the odometer, it still runs like a new one.

It was 8:30 Friday morning in late June when we filled the saddle bags, strapped on the extra luggage, and rode out of the garage of our Boerne home and onto the asphalt. The temperature was already 86 degrees. We decided right away that we were in no hurry. If it takes two days, that’s fine. If it takes two weeks, that’s okay too. We don’t have to be back to work until August.

We headed West on IH 10 and took the Fredericksburg exit at Comfort. At the yield sign we stopped for a group of 8-10 women bikers leaving Comfort on Highway 87. We fell into their formation behind the

sweep, staying far enough back to not invade their space. We didn’t know who they were but could tell from their license plates they were from Missouri. Their leader set the pace at about 70 MPH and in no time at all we were entering the Fredericksburg city limit. The group turned right at the intersection where we turned left to continue on to Mason.

We stop several times throughout the morning, for cold drinks, gas, or bio-breaks and at about 11:30 a.m. we rolled into the town of Buffalo Gap. Pam had seen a segment on Good Morning America the day before, about the Perini Ranch Steakhouse winning the world’s best hamburger award. We decide to judge for ourselves. Buffalo Gap is not that big, but we still had to ask a Sheriff’s Deputy how to find Perini’s.

“Just go up the road for about half-a-mile,” the Deputy said. “When you see all the cars you are there. They won the world’s best hamburger award yesterday.”

It turns out that everyone in the county had the same thought that we did. It took two hours to get one of those famous burgers.

On the road again, we chart a course for Abilene and in about 30 minutes we cross the city limit marker. It is 2:00 p.m. and the thermometer on the bank sign reads 102 degrees. We spot a nice looking hotel on Highway 84 across the street from Kent’s Harley Davidson, Honda, Suzuki. Three brands all under one roof. Since we own all three brands, we found this rather intriguing. We park the bikes under the covered entrance, check in, freshen up, and walk across the street to check out the Harley/Honda/Suzuki shop. Pam had been considering a new seat to replace the uncomfortable stock seat on her Shadow so she asks one of the Salesmen, “do you prefer Corbin, Mustang, or Saddleman?”

“You can’t go wrong with a Mustang,” the man replied. “But really it’s whatever you get used too.”

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Of course I prefer Corbin, but, I’ve asked many riders this same question and it seems that everyone has an opinion and no two are exactly alike. After kicking tires, sitting on several used bikes with custom seats, and looking over the merchandise, we cross the street, change into our swim wear, grab a blue felt bag covered bottle of Crown Royal out of the saddlebag, and head for the pool. We claim the only shaded area and fill our plastic Dixie cups with Crown and Cola.

At around 4:30 p.m. a group of eight men and women appear at the pool carrying a couple of Styrofoam coolers filled with Bud Light. After about ten minutes the group is complaining about how hot it is in the direct sunlight. Pam, socialite and Mrs. Congeniality, invites them over to share our shade. It turns out that they are a group of firefighter friends from around the state and were just getting together for the weekend. Some were bikers; some were not, so we spent the rest of the afternoon drinking Crown and Bud Light while discussing motorcycles and firefighting. After a couple of hours, we are invited to join them for dinner but politely decline. We decided to walk to a restaurant about a block away and enjoy a nice steak dinner before retiring for the evening.

We are up before 6:30 Saturday morning, eager to get back on the road before the heat sets in. Breakfast consists of scrambled eggs, bacon, and biscuits with gravy from the hotel dining room. At 7:30 a.m. we are in the parking lot loading the saddle bags when we see a man unlocking the opening the Discount Tire Store next to the hotel. He stops, re-locks the door and walks over to look at our bikes. “Where



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are you from" and "Where are you headed" were the typical question that we got each time we stopped for gas or food or whatever. "I wish I was going with you," he said. "I have a Gold Wing but I don't get to ride near as much as I'd like."

We pull onto IH 20 at about 7:45 a.m. and head west toward Sweetwater. Being in no hurry, I set the cruising pace at about 65 MPH. Soon, we begin to see hundreds of wind turbines on the distant horizon. They could be seen from miles away. What a concept! Wind energy was first discovered hundreds of years ago when it was used to move ships from point A to point B, and now it is making a comeback to generate electricity in massive quantities.

We pass through Snyder, Post, and Slaton, stopping whenever we want for whatever reason, and pass the Lubbock city limit marker at about 11:20 a.m. We find Buddy Holly with little effort and take the photos for the power point presentation. After all, this is the purpose of the road trip. We also check out the plaques honoring other entertainers who had at one time or another called West Texas home. There was Mac Davis, Waylon Jennings, "Snuff" Garrett, Dan Blocker, and Tanya Tucker among others. By Noon the temperature is 100 degrees. It's time to seek shelter. We spend the rest of the afternoon enjoying the company of our daughter and grand dogs.

Sunday morning we plot a route to San Angelo and hit the asphalt again at 7:30. I had forgotten about the cool summer nights in West Texas. We ride about five miles before we had to stop and put on long sleeved shirts. The temperature was 62 degrees. It didn't last long, however, and soon we are stopping again to return to short sleeves. We passed through Tahoka, O'Donnell (hometown of Dan Blocker), and Lamesa before stopping for gas and breakfast in Big Springs. It's about 9:30 a.m. and about 90 degrees. At 10:00 a.m. we were back on Highway 87 and two hours later we cross into San Angelo. It's now a humid 97 degrees but tolerable while riding at 65-70 MPH. Pam and I debate over whether to spend another night on the road or to go on home. "In another three-and-a-half hours we could be home and save some money," Pam said.

"Money," I replied, "we don't need no stinkin' money. We've got MasterCard!"

So, we choose a nice looking hotel, check in, and unload our things. We ride to a nearby restaurant for lunch and then change into our swimwear only to discover that the pool area is closed for repairs. But, that's okay! Just give us some cola to mix with the Crown and we'll do just fine.

We are on the road by 8:00 Monday morning and pass through Eden and Menard before taking a break in Junction. From there we enter the on-ramp to IH 10 and cruise along

nically at the 80 MPH speed limit. We pass through Kerrville and Comfort and pull into our driveway at 11:30 a.m.. After unpacking the saddlebags, it is time to tally the total cost of the Buddy Holly Memorial Statue photograph.

Food and Lodging: \$325

Gas for two motorcycles: \$90

Crown Royal: \$40

Total cost of a four day road trip with my best friend: PRICELESS!

