

My name is Jonathan Wharram. I may only be 17 years old as I sit to write this, but the story began when I was 16 years old. On the 23rd of July 2008, my father and I set out from Holley, New York for Los Angeles, California. I was 16 years old when I left home and I rode my 1993 Dyna Wide Glide across the country. We rode hard out to Colorado. In Colorado, we rode up to Pike's Peak and we went to the Royal Gorge. After riding for a couple of days in Colorado, we headed further west to the four corners of Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico, and then I was totally amazed at the Grand Canyon. Next we were headed to Las Vegas for a couple of days and then we ended up in our destination of Los Angeles. From there we headed north through the Sequoia National Forest. After California, we started heading back towards home and we went to Yellowstone National Forest. This was one of the best parts of the trip because the park has everything including animals, a beautiful land, and many natural wonders. After Yellowstone, we headed to Sturgis, South Dakota and spend three days at the biggest biker rally in the world. From there we rode long and hard back to New York where we call it home. This trip lasted for 21 days and we rode 7,033 miles. I have so many memories from this trip that I will have for my whole life. The best part of this incredible journey was that I got to spend it with my dad, and it launched a lifetime love of riding.

Being 16 years old and putting 7,033 miles on my bike in 21 days was only the beginning. Riding is in my blood and advocating for motorcyclists' rights is in my blood. I come from a long line of riders including my parents, sibling, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. I have attended biker rallies with them, gone on dice runs, and have volunteered at some of their functions. Every place we stop and everywhere we go triggers many conversations with fellow bikers talking about issues such as safer roadways, preventing accidents, and helmet laws just to name a few, and I think as a younger rider, I have a voice that needs to be shared. I have noticed that many of the members in my family's A.B.A.T.E. group and other groups across the country are older individuals and I think it is important for younger people to be involved. My desire and my inspiration to ride come from within and our freedoms are important. In August 2009, I will be starting college at Rochester Institute of Technology majoring in Civil Engineering. I will have the opportunity to make connections with many influential people including CEOs of major companies, and they in turn influence law makers. I have grown up watching my parents volunteer for many community groups and I have also volunteered myself for several different community groups. My parents have instilled in me a true sense of giving back to others and being involved with the people in my life. Advocating for motorcyclists' rights will be a win-win situation. Not only will I be able to help others in my community and across the nation, but I will also be helping myself since I plan on riding for the rest of my life.

(Jonathan Wharram)