

2007 Iron Butt Rally, Day 7  
Sunday, August 26, 2007

### **Do You Know the Way to San Jose?**

Apparently Rob Nye and Jim Frens don't, or at least they don't care. Early today, I received a report of their whereabouts. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is not on the way to San Jose; it's on the way to Homer, Alaska. Tomorrow, we should learn who else thinks they can average 1,300 miles per day over less than optimum roads for 6 days.

Everything has to go perfectly to get to Homer and back in six days. You can tolerate little or nothing in the way of bad weather, road construction zones, traffic congestion, bike problems, and encounters with animals on the road. Under the best of conditions, you aren't going to get much sleep. It will take a really tough rider with really good luck.

I had just finished writing the above paragraph at 2:30 p.m. Central Time when my cell phone rang. It was IBR veteran Paul Meredith, who is getting periodic updates on Rob Nye's progress. Rob is in Edmonton, Alberta. That's 1800 miles from Chesterfield, MO, and the bonus listings were handed out only 34 hours ago. Rob has been keeping a pace that is sufficient to make it to Homer and back.

Unfortunately, Rob's chances of scoring the Homer, Alaska, bonus have just vaporized. His BMW R1200RT, the one with the all-new, never needs maintenance final drive, is puking rear end lubricant all over Public Highway 16. Dammit! It's bad enough that Rob's valiant effort has to end this way; what's worse is that I am going to have to listen to that cackling witch of a rallymaster reminding me of our side bet on the percentage of BMWs that would finish without mechanical failures. She will laugh about it later, but it's not funny right now. We truly feel sorry for Rob because we know he was giving it his all.

Rob is clearly out of contention for a top ten finish, but he isn't necessarily out of the rally. We should know tomorrow whether he is going to get the Beemer fixed and back on the road. If anyone can do it, Rob can.

There are a couple of reports today of other BMW riders having less serious problems than Rob Nye. Yesterday, when Eric Jewell returned to the parking lot of Rally Central to do additional route planning, IBR staffer Greg Roberts noticed that Eric's rear tire was going flat. Spectator and former IBR winner Rick Morrison found a nail in the tire. The hole was plugged before Eric got back on the road, but the plug blew out as Eric was traveling west on I-70. He was able to replug the hole, but he really needed a new tire.

The nearest BMW dealer in Eric's direction of travel was Engle Motors in Kansas City. He called from the side of the road at 3:10 p.m. to learn that their service department closes at 3 on Saturday. When Eric told them his situation, one of the technicians who had not yet left agreed to wait for him. Eric called back later as he was motoring down the road on a new ME880. He asked me to pass this along: "Engle Motors Rocks!"

Bob Collin called in today from Colorado. He pulled off of the road to take a nap and left his 4-way flashers on. When he awoke his battery was dead. It took over two hours for the service vehicle to arrive and give him a jump. As the truck pulled away, Bob got back on the R1200RT and promptly stalled it. It wouldn't restart. By the time he got his second jump start, he had been sidelined for 5 hours.

Approaching midnight on Sunday, Tom and Rosie Sperry are sidelined in Kellogg, Idaho after the "tail dragger" auxiliary fuel cell on their K1200LT broke loose and fell against the rear tire. The rear tire is in shreds. They will try to get it fixed tomorrow morning and stay in the rally if at all possible.

Two more riders have dropped out as of today: Norm Grills on a BMW K1100LT and Dave Hinks on an FJR1300. Norm was too exhausted to continue after spending time trying to fix problems with his CB and XM radio that he should have spent sleeping. David lost all chances of being listed as a finisher when he lost his bonus listing. It blew out of his top case, which apparently hadn't been closed properly.

Most of the 87 riders remaining in the rally are undoubtedly headed for Lick Observatory at the top of Mount Hamilton, near San Jose, California. Because of the width of the time window, it won't be quite the mob scene it was at Gateway Arch, but there will be dozens of riders there at the same time. The key to placing well will be figuring out what other bonuses can be included in a route that contains the 24,057 point bonus at the Observatory.

Since tomorrow is the first call-in bonus for Leg 2, I will be posting a lot of information on where everyone is and where they are headed. I'm guessing that there are at least two other riders besides Nye and Frens that are on their way to Alaska.

During the break in the action at Rally Central, I want to acknowledge the efforts of volunteers who got everyone through the scoring process at the end of Leg 1. Ira Agin's team of scorers included Steve Hobart, Paul Glaves, John Harrison, Dennis Bitner, Roger Van Santen, Jim Fousek, Greg Roberts, Dave McQueeney, Don Moses, Jerry Harris, and Helen Austin. Bill Shaw served as the custodian of the envelopes into which all of the

bonus listings and documentation were filed. He also served as the maitre d'. About an hour before the opening of the checkpoint window, a queue of riders was forming for the scoring tables. Bill kept a list of riders waiting to be scored, which built up to about 20 at the busiest point. It was a very smoothly run operation.

Bob Higdon assisted Michael Kneebone with the final review and data entry process. Donna Fousek and Karen Van Santen also provided assistance to Kneebone and Rallymaster Landry throughout the evening.

In addition to their involvement in the scoring process, many of these same volunteers have put in an enormous amount of time scouting bonuses and doing other behind-the-scenes work necessary to make the 2007 Iron Butt Rally possible.

Tom Austin

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