

2007 Iron Butt Rally, Day 8
Monday, August 27, 2007

Eight Are Heading for Alaska

One of the best things about serving as Rally Scribe is being the first person to hear incoming messages from riders on the road that just make my jaw drop. Who on Earth would have expected a rider in 90th place at the end of Leg 1 to be on his way to Homer, Alaska?

Don Kulwicki, on a GL1800 Gold Wing, called me just before 3:30 p.m. Central Time today to tell me he had just bagged the 28,230 point Watson Lake bonus and is heading for Homer. He was 2,800 miles from Rally Central here in Chesterfield, MO and 59.5 hours into the ride. Since the bonus listings were handed out on Saturday morning, he had been averaging 47 mph. Unfortunately, that's way behind the pace required to get to Homer and back.

Two other intrepid riders are also on their way to Homer: Jim Frens and George Barnes. They have a chance of making it. Jim decided on his route plan quickly and was one of the first riders out of the parking lot at the start of Leg 2. George Barnes spent a lot of time planning a route around San Jose and then changed his mind at the last minute, giving Frens a head start of several hours.

Frens has increased his lead over Barnes. He called in from Tok, Alaska, at 4:35 p.m. Pacific Time. George was still 400 miles from Tok when he called in at 5:38 p.m. Jim is ahead of the schedule required to make it back from Homer; George is behind schedule. If it was anyone other than George Barnes, I would say he is toast.

The other Alaska bound riders aren't biting off quite so much. Dick Fish, Fred Droegemueller, Joe DeRyke, Bill Watt, and Paul Allison are all on their way to Hyder.

Where is the Routing Guru?

Homer, Alaska was a tempting destination for those riders with a butt of iron and a burning desire to win, but there are more points to be had on the West Coast for someone with the skill to plan an efficient route and the ability to hustle to bonus after bonus with very little time off the bike. Jim Owen, who was in second place at the end of Leg 1, is on a mission to score more points than are available by going to Homer as he does his vacuum cleaner routine on the West Coast.

David Derrick, the leader at the end of Leg 1, has fallen back in the pack after a fuel pump failure on his R1100RT. Because of the mileage on the bike, David was actually carrying a spare fuel pump with him.

The heartbreaking part of this story is that the bike was trashed while being trucked to the nearest BMW dealership in the back of a truck. What should have been a quick repair turned into an all day ordeal.

Kudos to BMW of Las Vegas for bringing in a technician on a day that the service department is normally closed. Unfortunately, David didn't get back on the road until almost 5 p.m.

"It's Day 8, What the Hell Do You Expect."

That was Alan Barbic's explanation for his embarrassing moment at Glacier Point. The bonus instructions said, "Take a picture of Half Dome from the Glacier Point overlook." He had just done that and was headed back down the road. While trying to ride his bike and double check the bonus listing at the same time (never a good idea), he saw something in the bonus listing about taking a picture of "one of the information signs." He stopped and tried to turn around on the narrow road. He dropped the bike in the process. When he finally got back to Glacier Point, he read the bonus instructions one more time; the picture of the information sign was only required "if weather prevents you from taking the picture" of Half Dome.

Several riders commented on what a nice ride it was to the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest. Rebecca Vaughn referred to it as "A pretty hellish little road." (The fact that it was 18,567 points should have been a clue.) Curt Gran had an especially nice ride up and down the mountain. He had a flat tire on the way up and dropped his bike on the way back down.

Mike Hutsal reported that the road to Bristlecone shook the windshield off his K1200GT. That's my old bike, the same one I used to scout the Bristlecone bonus in 2003; the windshield fell off before I got to the top. That's the road that convinced me to buy a GS for scouting Iron Butt Rally bonuses.

Brett Donahue found an even worse road to get back from Bristlecone. He let "Betty the Bitch" from his Garmin GPS route him down a goat trail called Silver Canyon Road. Brett knew he was in trouble when he got to the sign that said, "Four Wheel Drive Recommended After This Point." Six stream crossings later, he finally got back to pavement.

The road to the Trona Pinnacles also got good reviews. Ken Morton reported, "The road to the Pinnacles absolutely sucks."

Three More Riders Out

A total of 14 riders have now dropped out.

Homer Krout put his BMW R1200GS into a ditch on SR180 in Sequoia

National Park after hitting some gravel on the road. Homer is banged up a little bit but apparently okay. The bike is more than a little banged up; Homer thinks it may be totaled. He is probably out.

Steve Broadhead is definitely out. He had plans for doing Hyder, but he decided to pack it in when he reached his hometown of Calgary.

Alan Bennett, riding his first endurance rally on a Hopeless Class 250 cc Kawasaki, is also out. In addition to being beaten up by the weather on Leg 1, he had his GPS and tank bag stolen. Because the tank bag contained some of the receipts he needed at the scoring table, he ended up in 87th place with only 53, 225 points. He wasn't doing well on Leg 2 and has decided to call it quits.

Glenn Pancoast is the second victim of a rear drive failure on the all-new, never needs maintenance final drive on his R1200GS. But he will apparently be back on the road tomorrow.

Location, Location, Location

At the riders meeting for the start of Leg 2, everyone received supplemental instructions regarding the call-in bonus. To help riders remember what they need to report, they were told "Think of the three most important things when it comes to real estate; location, location, and location." Two riders, Bill Thweatt and Peter Murray, failed to report their current location. Vance Keeney failed to report his next location. As was said at the riders meeting, "The sleep bonus" doesn't cut it.

We think Rick Martin also lost the call-in bonus for using Vicki Johnston's rider number. Either that or Vicki Johnston sounds really bad today and is using Rick Martin's name.

Listed below, in order of the time that they called in, is the location and next destination for each rider. All times are Pacific Daylight Savings Time.

12:12 a.m., Jim Simonet is in Jarrell, TX, and headed for The Alamo.
12:24 a.m., Paul Peloquin is in Las Vegas, NV, and headed for Death Valley.
12:33 a.m., Matt Watkins is in Pahrump, NV, also headed to Death Valley.
1:08 a.m., Terry and Lynda Lahman are in Ely, NV, headed next to Yosemite.
1:09 a.m., Bob and Silvie Torter are in North Dakota and headed for Lake Louise.
1:29 a.m., Jim Bain is in Kingman, AZ, headed for Las Vegas.
1:33 a.m., Peter Leap is in Washington, UT, headed for Las Vegas.
1:35 a.m., Rick Miller is in Kingman, AZ, headed for the nearby "Golf Ball House."
2:15 a.m., Stephan Bolduc is in Mitchell, SD, headed for Mt. Rushmore.

2:20 a.m., Jim and Donna Phillips appear to be riding with Stephan Bolduc.
2:22 a.m., Steve Branner is in Utah on his way to Las Vegas.
3:12 a.m., Rick Neeley is in Wyoming on his way to Dinosaur National Monument.
3:25 a.m., Richard Buber is in El Paso, TX, heading for White Sands, NM.
3:26 a.m., Mike Senty appears to be riding with Buber.
3:29 a.m., Jim Winterer appears to be riding with Buber and Senty.
3:30 a.m., Ken Morton is in Ridgecrest, CA, headed for Sequoia National Park.
4:17 a.m., Reiner and Lisa Kappenberger are also in Ridgecrest headed for Sequoia.
4:19 a.m., John Tomasovitch is in Las Vegas and headed for Death Valley.
4:22 a.m., Chris McGaffin is in Paige, AZ, and headed for Sequoia.
4:37 a.m., Don Catterton is in New Mexico headed for White Sands.
4:44 a.m., Peter Murray is headed for Lake Louise.
4:49 a.m., David Bordeaux is in North Dakota, headed for Mt. Rushmore.
4:56 a.m., Marty Leir is in Big Pine, CA, headed for Bristlecone Pine Forest.
5:12 a.m., Dennis Powell is at Wall Drugs in South Dakota headed for Mt. Rushmore.
5:13 a.m., Greg Marbach is in Bishop, CA, headed for Bristlecone.
5:22 a.m., Jim Mulcahy is in Canada, headed for Lake Louise.
5:29 a.m., Brian Roberts is in Nevada, headed for Death Valley.
5:37 a.m., John Langan is also in Nevada, headed for Death Valley.
5:53 a.m., Carl Stark is in Tonopah, NV headed for Bristlecone.
5:57 a.m., Michael Boge is riding with Carl Stark.
5:59 a.m., Andy Mills is in Colorado, headed for Dinosaur National Monument.
6:12 a.m., Kevin Healey is in Arizona, headed for the Grand Canyon.
6:17 a.m., Glenn Pancoast is in Laramie, WY, headed for Dinosaur.
6:23 a.m., Tom Skemp is in Wendover, NV, headed for Gerlach.
6:25 a.m., Bob Collin appears to be riding with Tom Skemp.
6:49 a.m., Richard Keegan is in Bakersfield, CA, headed for Sequoia.
7:01 a.m., Jeff Earls is at the ferry terminal in Port Angeles headed for Vancouver Island.
7:17 a.m., Don Jones is at Idaho Springs, CO, headed for Tennessee Pass.
7:58 a.m., Jack Shoalmire is on his way from Las Vegas to Death Valley.
8:24 a.m., Karol Patzer is in Las Vegas and headed for Death Valley.
8:28 a.m., Fred Droegemueller is in Lake Louise and headed for Hyder, AK.
8:29 a.m., Joe DeRyke is also in Lake Louise and headed for Hyder, AK.
8:32 a.m., Tony DeLorenzo is in Las Vegas and headed for Death Valley.
8:45 a.m., Bill Thweatt is on his way to Death Valley.
9:16 a.m., Rick Martin is on his way from Wendover, NV, to Gerlach.
9:42 a.m., Bob Mueller is in Jacob Lake, AZ, headed for Las Vegas.
9:55 a.m., Jim Owen is in Carson, WA, and headed for Maryhill, WA
10:35 a.m., Tom and Rosie Sperry are in Kellogg, ID, headed for Mt. St. Helens.
10:39 a.m., Art Garvin is in Tonopah, NV, headed for Death Valley.
10:49 a.m., Steve Broadhead called it quits from his hometown in Calgary.
11:24 a.m., Kendall Anderson is in Big Pine, CA, headed for Yosemite.
12:04 p.m., Brett Donahue is on Highway 395 headed for Yosemite Village.
12:11 p.m., Tom Melchild is at Glacier Point (Yosemite), headed for Mono Hot Springs.
12:17 p.m., Mike Evans is on Vancouver Island and headed for Hurricane Ridge, WA.
12:28 p.m., Rob Nye is Edmonton, Alberta, and headed for Lake Louise.
12:31 p.m., Vicki Johnston is departing Glacier Point for Mono Hot Springs.
12:35 p.m., Chris Sakala is en route to Mono Hot Springs from Yosemite.

12:56 p.m., Mark Collins is in Belgrade, MT, and headed for Kellogg, ID.
1:15 p.m., Don Kulwicki is in Watson Lake, YT, and on his way to Homer, AK.
2:24 p.m., Dick Fish is in Fraser Lake, BC, and on his way to Hyder, AK.
3:02 p.m., Alex Schmitt is in Tacoma, WA, and on his way to Mt. St. Helens.
3:12 p.m., Doug Bailey is in Seattle, WA, and on his way to Mt. St. Helens.
3:16 p.m., Gregg Burger is in Bishop, CA, and on his way to Mono Hot Springs.
4:33 p.m., Mike Langford is Oakhurst, CA, and on his way to Mono Hot Springs.
4:35 p.m., Jim Frens is in Tok, Alaska, and on his way to Homer, AK.
4:53 p.m., David Derrick is in Las Vegas and on his way to the Yosemite Village.
5:38 p.m., George Barnes is in Whitehorse and on his way to Homer, AK.
6:27 p.m., Chris Cimino is in San Francisco and on his way to Livermore, CA.
7:55 p.m., Maura Gatensby is in Elko, NV, headed for Yosemite.
8:08 p.m., Joel Rappoport is in Wall, SD, headed for Kellogg, ID
8:30p.m., Curt Gran is at Mono Hot Springs and on the way to San Jose.
8:49 p.m., Paul Allison is on the way to Hyder.
8:59 p.m., Mike Getzendanner is in Clovis, CA on the way to San Francisco.
8:59 p.m., Bill Watt is in British Columbia, on his way to Hyder.
9:01 p.m., Mike Hutsal is in Los Banos, CA, on his way to San Francisco.
9:11 p.m., Lisa Stevens is in Fresno, CA, headed for Livermore, CA.
9:14 p.m., Tobie Stevens is, of course, following Lisa.
9:26 p.m., Rebecca Vaughn is on her way from Yosemite to Big Sur, CA.
9:33 p.m., Alan Barbic is on his way from Mono Hot Springs to Santa Cruz.
9:39 p.m., Eric Jewell is on his way to Mono Hot Springs.
9:43 p.m., Dick Peek is in Yosemite Village, headed for the Ahwahnee Hotel.
10:14 p.m., Vance Keeney is in Livermore, CA, headed who knows where.
11:40 p.m., Gerhard Memmen-Kruger is in San Francisco headed for the Lick Observatory tomorrow morning.

Tomorrow is the parade to the Lick Observatory at the top of Mt. Hamilton, where the riders have to sign in with Dean Tanji to score the 24,057 point bonus. Some riders will be taking a fairly direct route back to Rally Central after that. Riders who are going to finish in the top ten have a lot more bonus hunting to do first.

Tom Austin

August 27, 2007

Copyright (c) 2007 Iron Butt Rally, Inc., Chicago, IL