

Wednesday June 28 Sidebar #2

Communication on travel days for the rally staff tends to revolve around phone calls, texts, and copious note taking. There is less time to write and post full reports, not to mention less information being available. Add in some weather and traffic delays and yesterday's official daily report was abbreviated, to say the least. This sidebar will hopefully make up for that sliver of information posted on Day 2.

The massive number of folks hitting the servers seeking any updates has resulted in repeated crashes of the IBA website and Jason Jonas' Spotwalla page. Dale, Jason, and several others behind the scenes have been working feverishly on various solutions, resulting in a few workarounds that will hopefully get the info out to the rabid masses, otherwise known as the long distance rider community, for the rest of the rally.

When all of that is considered, you might expect the frustration level to be elevated as Rally Central relocates from Minneapolis, Minnesota to Allen, Texas. The reality is that your scribe may be the only one that experienced a slightly elevated frustration level yesterday. The rest of this crew is the epitome of professionalism and they remain calm, cool, and collected under fire. It is a privilege to work with such a great group of people.

Perhaps just so the staff does not feel like the only ones overcoming 'issues', the riders have encountered more than their fair share of problems to resolve. One of the bonuses that a number of riders attempted to collect on Day 1 was closed. Even though the guidance on what to do in such a situation was made clear, the Rallymaster's phone was working overtime receiving all of the calls from riders asking what they needed to do. There was a sign that clearly identified the bonus and its closed status, so all that was needed in this case was a photo.

The call-in bonuses generated a few interesting calls and a bit of insight into the condition of the riders. Perhaps the most amusing came from one of the Aussie rider contingent, Martin Little. He stopped at a motel for a rest bonus and asked the desk clerk what kind of electronic receipts they used. The reply was "Don't worry; your wife will not know you have been at this establishment." We sincerely hope he took a photo that fine establishment.

Sunday night, Maura, ever the observant veteran, caught the fact that her bonus book was missing a page. She brought it to the Rallymaster's attention and the issue was resolved. Rookie Chuck Lackey did not realize that he had a page missing from his bonus book until Tuesday. It was an especially important page, because it outlined the call-in bonus info.

Apparently not wanting to bother the Rallymaster, Chuck called rider Nancy Lefcourt. Nancy may or may not have informed him that she was in the midst of a vital sleep session. She also may or may not have suggested that he call Lisa. Whatever the case, Chuck managed to acquire

the missing rest bonus information. It is amusing to the staff when riders call the Rallymaster asking questions that have been discussed in the newsletters, rider meetings, or written in the rally book. Yet they somehow do not call her first when they have issues that need to come to her attention. Chuck has also sent out a request for some ointment and Band-aids at the checkpoint to treat either an irritated ankle or foot.

After three attempts, Ishii Yohinori successfully completed his call-in bonus. He is not exactly in danger of earning a performance award on the highway with his 400cc scooter. His Spot tracker shows a significant difference between uphill velocity and downhill velocity. From Ishii's location at about 10 hours from the close of the checkpoint, a normal bike would not have a problem hauling its rider to the checkpoint in time, but he will need to maintain normal traffic speeds to arrive on time.

Wolfe Bonham secured his slot in the IBR as a result of his top 10 Butt Lite Finish. He was reported by a friend to have called from a stop in Birmingham, Alabama feeling a little tired. However, his Spot track suggests that he is moving toward the checkpoint and is on track to arrive before the window closes. His call-in bonus message was highly entertaining and we will try to get a link to the voice file posted soon.

David Walls admitted that he experienced a roadside chat with Officer Jeff Gooss in North Dakota, deep in the heart of pheasant country. David, an FJR rider, told Officer Gooss that he knew Dale Wilson and was let go. Apparently it helps to have friends in high places.

Felipe Salman reported sitting on the side of the road near Rapid City, SD to wait out a big thunderstorm. Spotwalla also showed a big storm in central Nebraska last night drenching at least three riders in that area. We have not received any reports that those riders had any trouble as a result of being in that weather.

Mike Hutsal reported that he is in Memphis, Tennessee waiting for a dealership to open because he has no front brakes on his BMW. A later call confirmed that his front wheel bearings have failed, which pushed the pistons back from the rotors, creating the brake problem. A Google search shows that this is apparently a common problem with the K16LT. The BMW dealer should have bearing set or a wheel from another bike, if they are willing to assist a rider in trouble. There should also be enough time to resolve the problem and still make the checkpoint.

Connie Gabrick borrowed a phone and called Lisa, asking if there was a place near the checkpoint hotel to get a burner phone. No, Connie is not running a nefarious Breaking Bad style side business during the rally. She was at a fuel stop on an off camber surface and the bike tipped over. It spilled fuel into a storage cubbie that contained her cell phone.

Troy Martin's Leg 1 expectations might be a bit on the low side. His call-in bonus comments included an ecstatic pronouncement that he had gone a day and a half without crashing! Some may recall that he crashed twice on Leg 1 in 2015.

The Boge family may be having a blast, but we don't know where that fun is occurring because they apparently do not have their Spot tracker turned on. Tim Masterson verified that their Spot unit was working during the registration process. Yes, there are points associated with having a working Spot tracker during each leg.

Mark Crane got his call-in bonus within the window and then checked in again to confirm that despite experiencing some struggles during the last couple of days, his sense of humor remained intact by adding that the game of dominos at the start was "the sidestand's fault". He was sincerely thankful that the bikes were not seriously damaged and especially that no one was hurt. While such an embarrassing situation at the start might throw anyone off their game, we are sure that Mark has the experience and fortitude necessary to shuck it off and get his head back into the task at hand. It is just Leg 1 and there is a lot more rally left to unfold. Jeff Earls was heard wondering if there would be any more sudden gusts of gravity experienced before the end of the rally.

Andy Mackie swerved to avoid some traffic at a standstill on I-64 and took a bit of a tumble trying to get back onto the pavement. He called the Rallymaster to report that he was OK, let her know what happened, and why his Spot was stopped on the interstate, which is exactly what he needed to do. Andy noted that his bike was rideable, but he experienced a bit of a "yard sale" as his tankbag came off and there were cigars spread all over the shoulder of the highway. For those who are wondering, no, we do not have those coordinates available.

Danny Dossman called the Rallymaster Tuesday night at 9:17 p.m. to let her know that he could not find his camera. Danny was understandably distraught, but after the conversation with Lisa, he planned to take his rest bonus and resume his search for the camera with a fresh perspective. It is still early in the rally and even if he cannot find the camera, such a setback does not mean his rally is over.

Tina Venters called in on Wednesday morning with a question about a difficult to photograph bonus. She found a workable solution to her dilemma. She also was reported to sound fresh and alert.

Philip Weston called and said the heat was getting to him. He was in Denver. Hopefully he is hydrating with proper electrolytes. We don't expect it to get any cooler for the next few days.

There were a few bikes in the IBA Rally Rider parking area here at the Courtyard in Allen, Texas last night, a full 24 hours before the checkpoint closes. Before you ask, no, there should not be

any riders throwing away that much time on Leg 1. They were all staff bikes, except for one, with some still dripping from the massive downpour that flooded an area between Love Field and the Courtyard Allen Marriott.

The one that was a rider bike belongs to Jim Burris. The checkpoint had not opened, so he did not check in. He apparently got an extra night added to his reservation, got some rest, and then went back out this morning to collect more bonuses.

Mike Riley called Lisa to let her know that he has fuel filter issues, so he is going by his home in Oklahoma to change the filter and then get himself to the checkpoint before it closes. He should have time, if everything goes according to plan.

Jesse Lucas, an always helpful spectator, is here at the checkpoint. He reported that John Coons has notified some forum members that he is having fuel filter issues with his 1994 BMW. Jesse is working on getting a filter for John in case Coons can get to the checkpoint in time to stay in the rally.

We would expect to start seeing some riders arrive before the checkpoint opens today. After all, Leg 1 is not the time for most of the riders to be pushing the checkpoint window limits. Robert Bolger is reported to have arrived before the checkpoint opened, but we have not had an opportunity to talk to him.

However, a perusal of Spotwalla over the last few hours has indicated a few riders who appear to be on the bubble. Some of them may find themselves needing to maintain a near BBG pace to arrive here before the checkpoint closes. The relentless rally clock does not wait for anyone.

One of those riders is Paul Slaton. At 10:00 a.m. Wednesday morning he appeared to be about 10 hours away from the checkpoint with 10 hours remaining before the penalty window expires.

Another is Kirsten Talken-Spauling. She seems to have some sleep banked, but she was also about 10 hours away with 10 hours remaining.

Mark Crane is about 100 miles behind Kirsten's position, so he may be hoping for a gravity wave to work in his favor for once.

John Coons is coming from a different direction, but also appears to be cutting it close, especially with the reported fuel filter issue.

Martin Cover reported to Lisa that he ran out of fuel in North Dakota, but managed to coast into a fuel station. Some of the staff thinks that with luck like that, perhaps he should have been in Las Vegas instead of North Dakota.

Steve Bracken appears to be on the bubble for a tight arrival. He also reports that his windscreen blew off in South Dakota early on Tuesday. No word on whether he has made repairs or is riding in with his helmet in the breeze ... and the bugs ... and the rain.

Dace Park called in and sounded like she was having a lot of fun. She spoke slowly and clearly to insure that the listener could understand her slight southern accent, but suggested that Lisa get your scribe to interpret her words if there were any questions.

Chris Comly noted that he was making his call-in bonus from a Harley dealership, where he had stopped for parts. He said the parts were needed to keep the top box functional, but some of us are thinking he may be looking for a few chrome farkles.

It would be a massive understatement to say that David Walls sounded disheartened when he called Lisa to let her know that he lost his "score sheet, rally book, everything". Even if his search for the lost items is not successful, if he manages to get to the checkpoint on time, he may be able to salvage his rally.

Rally Central received reports that I-25 was closed for about one and a half hours in Wyoming yesterday. It may have impeded the progress of a few riders.

It appears that two riders did not complete the call-in bonus on Leg 1. Staff will be following up with those riders when they arrive at the checkpoint.

Rewind

Let's take a moment to back up and fill in some details that we have not had time to cover. At the rider banquet on Sunday night, the Rider #1 IBR Rally Flag was assigned to Peter Behm, the winner of the 2011 IBR. Peter's lovely and gracious widow, Paula, came up to the podium and accepted the flag from the RallyMom and spoke about Peter and what this community meant to him and to her. It was a beautiful and fitting tribute to one of the nicest guys this community has ever known. He is missed by all that knew him. It was very special to have Paula speak at the banquet and remind the riders about to start such a ride about what is truly important. It was also very cool to have Paula at the start, serving as a volunteer for the odometer check.

Many in the community know riders Rick and Barbara Bailey. They rode many 24 hours rallies together over the years and Barbara desperately wanted to ride the IBR, but Rick's stroke and subsequent accident and Barbara's struggles with multiple physical issues prevented the realization of that dream. Sadly, she lost her battle a few weeks ago. Thanks to Lynn Carey's efforts, a number of riders are carrying Barbara Bailey stickers on their IBR rally bikes as a tribute to a great lady that will be missed.

At the rider banquet, the two pre-declared multi-bike teams were handed their rally packets first. Greg Rice and Rob Wilensky are both on BMWs, with one of them being the rebuilt bike that fell off the lift. Greg asked Lisa if he was really out of the rally if Rob's bike experienced issues and could not complete the rally. The answer, of course, was yes. If one bike or rider on the team fails to finish, the other rider will also be a DNF.

This might be a good time to share a post from the IBR private rider forum from a few months ago. It was posted by IBA#203 and went something like this:

Top 10 reasons you should team up with another rider in the IBR:

10. You just can't live without the added stress of being married to someone other than your spouse for 11 days in the heat of summer...

9. Talking to another rider non-stop for days and days is the only way to quiet the voices in your head ...

8. You just can't abide wasting that empty bed in a hotel room every night ...

7. You just can't remember to put your rally flag back in the trunk without help ...

6. Sleeping when you are tired is not a challenge, you need the extra challenge of trying to sleep and watching the minutes tick away when the other rider needs to sleep and you don't ...

5. Stopping for bathroom breaks on just your schedule is far too easy; you need the extra challenge of coordinating personal issues with another ride ...

4. You prefer watching your rearview mirror (or the same taillight) for 11 days instead of enjoying the scenery ...

3. The possibility of your own bike breaking down is not enough; you want to double the odds ...

2. You are afraid that you can't route efficiently and are looking to sucker a rider that can into helping you with the promise of great camaraderie ...

1. You really, really feel the need to provide more entertainment for the rally staff!

After the three rider, three bike team collected their *one flag* and three rally packs on Sunday night, the Rallymaster moved on to recognize the three-up, one sidecar team and the eight two-up, one bike teams. Team Boge and Team Almond Joy received an extra helping of applause from the rest of the riders.

The two hopeless class riders were next, Jerry Anderson on the 1974 GT750 two-stroke and Dylan Spink on the 1977 GL1000. Past winner Jim Owen led off the list of IBR veterans that have

made the podium in the past, followed by the rest of the experienced three digit entrants. The rather large rookie field were presented with their packets last.

The Leg 1 “strings” were revealed. There are five categories of bonuses. On Leg 1, the riders have the ability to collect bonuses from any of the five categories. However, they also have the option of connecting three bonuses in a row from any one of the five categories, forming a string, which results in the third bonus value being doubled. Assuming each bonus in the string is collected properly. Multiple strings are available, but they cannot overlap.

This is from the inside cover of the rally book:

2017 Iron Butt Rally

North American Safari

The 2017 Iron Butt Rally (IBR) is designed to lead you on a photo safari of North America’s iconic animals, both real and imagined. Armed with only your camera and motorcycle, you will roam the wilds in search of these elusive creatures. Fortunately, all of the target creatures are sedentary and quite unlikely to run onto the road.

In this catalog, you will find data on different beasts to hunt. Your goal is to capture a photo and escape before they turn on you.

The animals in the rally book are divided into five categories for your sorting enjoyment:

Air

These majestic birds and insects capture our imagination with their ability to soar above it all and see the world from a different perspective.

Land

From iconic images of native bison to fearsome predators to pets, land animals are symbols of nature, strength, and companionship.

Water

Creatures of ocean, lake, river, and stream, these animals provide food, sport, and in some cases provoke visceral fear.

Prehistoric

Eons ago, giants roamed these lands. You can still find their remnants today if you know where to look.

Mythical

Born of our imagination, whimsy, or a need to explain the unknown, these creatures popped up throughout history. Search out representations of those fanciful ideas.

This keepsake booklet identifies each of the 328 different creature bonuses available on your safari and provides specific directions to document each bonus. Bonus codes are listed alphabetically. Points and leg-specific instructions will be in the Leg Bonus Packs.

Enjoy the adventure!

After the riders disperse from the banquet, the staff takes a short breather. After the riders have a chance to work through their bonus packs, Kneebone, the Rallymaster, and the Routemaster traditionally conduct a visit to a few of the rider's hotel rooms on Sunday night after the banquet. It always proves interesting to see where the riders are planning to go, how they are processing the data, and evaluate their apparent stress level.

The senior staff found Bob Lilley struggling with which of the multiple possibilities would work the best. He affectionately referred to Routemaster Earls as a sadistic S.O.B.

The timing of the visit to Wendy Crockett found her at a point of maximum frustration with the planning process. She is nothing if not persistent, so we expected her to regroup and rework the problem. A subsequent conversation with her in the starting area Monday morning confirmed that she had done exactly that and arrived at what she thought would be a satisfying route plan.

That is the end of the rewind for now, perhaps there will be time for additional fill in later. More rally status info as it becomes available.

John Harrison
IBR Scribe
Iron Butt Rally©

