

In the Day -1 report, after the rider's dinner, "The Road Less Traveled" was made public as the theme of the 2019 rally. Jeff based it on a line from Robert Frost's famous poem "The Road Not Taken". At that dinner, before the riders received their rally packets, your scribe read the poem to the riders...and suggested they might take the time to read it again after the rally, to find out if their understanding or perception of Frost's words had changed during their 11 day adventure.

Some riders may find themselves haunted by choices not made, as they reflect on choices which did not work out, or paths they considered, but did not take. Some riders are no doubt pleased with the success of their chosen path. But whichever path riders in the 2019 rally may have chosen, they had the opportunity to see beauty and grandeur, the vastness of the United States and our neighbor to the north, and experience some of the best...and worst...roads available for motorcycling.

### **The Road Not Taken**

by Robert Frost

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

Riders spent a lot of time trying to find the best route, both in Greenville and Kennewick. When planning, they were that one traveler, and long they stood, or sat, at their routing task. But this rally refused to present one clear path to victory, even when they took hours to try and look as far as they could.

*Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,*

Each choice seemed to produce similar points, each just as fair, each path calling to be ridden. Would weather be the determining factor, or would it really be the chosen path itself?

*And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

But each rider had to make a choice, as they were indivisible and could not ride to all the available options. There would not be time for going back, should the first choice prove to be too difficult, or too far to complete. The clock is a relentless and cruel master during the IBR, regardless of the chosen path. They must choose the first step and hope way would lead to way.

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

Those who were fortunate to have experienced this rally shall be telling the story ages and ages hence, as it was truly an epic event, in a long line of epic events.

Frost would not have needed to consider the question of which path might be better, had he chosen to stay on the couch instead of venturing into the yellow wood and road less traveled. But like every rider who started this rally, he and his friend Edward ventured out and subjected themselves to the dilemma of wondering if the chosen path was the best.

It should be comforting, in some way, to every rider who attempted this rally, that their chosen path, regardless of the outcome, was a better choice than sitting on a couch. Hopefully, they are not like Edward, worrying about the missed experience of a path not chosen. May they be like Frost, at peace, knowing it made all the difference to have made the choice and enjoyed their chosen path.

### **Choosing a path**

Designing a rally which is difficult for the most competitive riders to win and still be something riders with less ambitious plans can finish is no small task. When your scribe designed the 24 hour *Run for the Hills* rally for the IBA Eastern Regional Meet a few years ago, making it easy to finish and difficult to win was one of my goals. Bonuses were not necessarily selected for their interest value or uniqueness, although those attributes were part of the criteria. Most of the bonuses were selected in a way to send riders down my most favorite backroads in the Appalachian Mountain region. It was a rally with multiple paths to winning, where everything had to click just right for a rider to win, but it was also not too difficult to become a finisher for those doing their very first 24-hour event. And no matter which path was chosen, the riders all had the opportunity to enjoy awesome backroads in the mountains.

Creating a rally on a continental scale, designed to put all the riders on great backroads, challenge the best IBR competitors as the premier rally in the long distance rally should, while not causing more than half the field to DNF, is orders of magnitude more difficult than designing a 24-hour rally. Combine that idea with time limited bonuses and combinations to challenge the planning abilities and clock management skills of the world's best rally riders and things start to get very interesting and challenging.

Jeff thought most riders would be expecting a rally similar to his masterful 2017 event, just on steroids. To keep things interesting and challenging, he went off in a different direction, bringing in some elements of the vintage 2001 and 2003 events to drop a checkpoint and shake up the time available, along with some sit-there-twist-that aspects of the even older, pre-1999 style IBRs, capped off with timed bonus windows and combinations requiring precise planning to execute. Jeff selected locations based on how interesting the ride would be to get to them, or the scenery riders would be able to enjoy. He noted he wanted the riders to get to see something far better than just a GPS screen for 11 days.

Some riders on leg 1 were averaging more than 1100 miles per bonus and that dose of old school *sit there, twist that* riding was unexpected, forcing riders to abandon much of what they may have been anticipating for the past 14 months. Especially riders who might be used to shorter rallies with a lot of bonuses in close proximity to each other. Or riders who had never studied the reports from the old school rallies. Or both.

The final twisted feature, requiring riders to get off their bikes and hike or climb to many of the bonuses, added in some difficulty to calculate stop times. One two-up team, Riders #3, finally sorted out the timing issue by allowing one hour per bonus as a rough estimate of what it was going to take to properly bag each bonus location. Only after they implemented that strategy were they able to stay on schedule with their chosen route. While a twisty road might be easy and fun to navigate in daylight, it might become a major time sucking struggle if the timing caused a rider to encounter it after dark. Even the best LEDs fail to make riding a twisty road at night as easy or as enjoyable as riding the same road in the daylight. Add some rain or cold temperatures into the mix and a bonus that should have taken an hour to collect might use up 3 hours, or more, of precious on-the-clock time.

Riders who failed to take into consideration the time required to collect a bonus would find themselves needing to drop later bonuses or use their bail-out options, that is, if they had built in any bail out options. While hiking would allow riders to stretch their legs and restore circulation, it would also challenge the fitness of this mostly graying crowd signing up for the experience of a lifetime. Going for too many small points and then running out of time for big rocks on leg one had a lot of riders scrambling to reach the target level for finisher points at the first checkpoint.

Jeff and Lisa had a few IBR top finishers test route the rally package prior to the event. Jeff did not intend for there to be one clear path to victory in this rally. The results of the early tests confirmed his design. No two vets came up with the same route. Jeff and the rally staff did not know which path would prove to be the one to make all the difference. We were just as interested in what the riders' choices would be as every other spectator glued to Jason's Spotwalla tracking page.

There were enough points in play to the far north for a win to come from anyone who could pull it off. Unlike the 2001 IBR, however, successfully going to the far north was not a guarantee of a win in this rally. There were some river combos in the lower 48 which could yield enough points to win. One path included the Mississippi River run and another was from the western shore of Lake Superior to the mouth of the Saint Lawrence Seaway in the east.

Doing some of the north of 60 degrees latitude bonuses efficiently, then dropping south and getting the Mississippi river combo was a possibility. Using the extra time available on Leg 2 by not returning to Kennewick could allow a rider to pick up more bonuses or cover more ground. But planning a smart loop through the western states and coming back to Kennewick allowed a nice 23,591 point add for some sleep. Was it possible to come back to Kennewick for the big points AND get the Columbia and St. Lawrence bonuses? Only a few riders thought so.

Going to Tuktoyaktuk on the shores of the Arctic Ocean was even a possibility, although a very risky ride, needing 1200 mile days on roads with low speed limits, including over 600 miles of dirt and gravel...each way...and a ferry crossing which is not open 24 hours and might not be operational at the times needed. Add in the difficult-to-forecast weather in the far north, potentially producing storms which would make the road nearly impassible, and it is not surprising no one took the chance.

Tim Masterson's efforts to establish and highlight the historic 1903 George A. Wyman cross country trip finally made it into the IBR bonus offerings this year. Tim was heartened by the recognition and many of the riders appreciated the inclusion. Several who found themselves choosing other combinations stated their regret at not being able to do all the Wyman waypoints during the rally. <https://wymanmemorialproject.blogspot.com/p/project-goals.html>

### **On the way to Greenville**

Ken Aman called Lisa from somewhere in the Canadian north and said his bike had taken a dirt nap. He was OK, but thought his bike was too damaged to continue. Lisa has a knack for evaluating situations from a distance with more clarity than riders who may be stressing out about plans gone awry. With just a few pointed questions, she had Ken refocused and looking for solutions to resume his ride. He was successful with getting the bike operational and continuing to collect bonuses.

The two-up team of Jim Winterer and Lisa Erbes, affectionately known as Team Wintererbes, call St. Paul, Minnesota, home. One might expect the pillion navigator/rallymaster of many Team Strange rallies would not even need a GPS to route through Minneapolis-St. Paul, right? Wrong. They managed to get lost in their hometown, even with a GPS! The IBR is not easy and has a way of reminding riders they may not know what they think they know. To Jim and Lisa's credit, they were able to laugh at their situation and find their way back to Greenville, SC.

Ian McPhee was at the Gaspé bonus with Wendy and the Facebook photo of them together captured a great memory they will share for many years. Ian did not have the rally he wanted, but managed to get himself to a Bronze finish, despite having to replace the failed final drive on his BMW. He had that drive rebuilt just prior to the rally to try and avoid the all too common malady, but even that preventative step did not save him. Thanks to Dan Simmonds, who did not start the rally, for jumping in a car and hauling a spare final drive unit to meet Ian along his route and help with a relatively quick roadside parts swap.

There was heavy traffic in Atlanta and huge construction backups along the I-85 corridor, the route many of the river combo riders were following to the finish in Greenville. Kevin Gardner called Lisa to tell her he had been sideswiped by a car in Atlanta and would not make it to the finish. Lisa talked him through how to handle the law enforcement at the scene and get himself moving to the finish in time. He called back and said he was hurting, his knees were swelling, and he was not sure he would be able to hold the bike up when he arrived at the Marriott in Greenville. He asked that volunteers not approach the bike as he arrived since he was pretty sure he would fall over. This wasn't our first rodeo, so instead, Steve Hobart and Allen Dye were recruited to play the role of bike catchers. Kevin made it back in time and, with a little help, the bike did not take a nap in the parking lot.

John Kerr was on the bubble coming into the finish. After his DNF in 2017 and the key fob issue in this rally, it was not looking good as the minutes ticked by in Greenville. After having such a great attitude in the face of difficulty in his second attempt to attain a 3-digit number, no one wanted to see him collect another DNF. Somehow, he managed to work his way through the construction successfully and finally became a finisher, in 17<sup>th</sup> place.

Lyle Monroe was especially pleased to have rider number 37 on his rally flag. That was his dad's race car number. It was not planned, but it sure was cool how that worked out for him.

Kevin and Lynda Weller somehow overcame the failed rear wheel and additional tire issues which tried to sabotage their rally. They managed to make up for lost time and ride their Yamaha Super Tenere to the top two-up finisher placing, 26<sup>th</sup> overall with a Silver medal. Good show for the tenacious Brits!

In a pleasant coincidence, Michelin shares a parking lot with the Greenville Marriott and the tire maker's staff went out of their way to welcome the 2019 IBR. If you were in Greenville or saw Steve's photos, you may have seen the giant inflatable Michelin Man that stood guard over the bikes in the parking lot. Or perhaps you heard about the lunch and seminar held for riders and spectators prior to the start. In addition, a set of motorcycle tires was donated for one lucky rider and announced at the finish banquet. Perhaps the first time a rider has been 'rewarded' for a less than efficient ride in the IBR, high mileage rider Peter Green, with 13,314 miles during the rally, was the very happy recipient.

Your scribe would be remiss if failing to also mention two other long time suppliers of IBR rider swag. Probably one of the most favorite, and most useful, mementos of my IBRs is the ever present, two-piece travel toothbrush, printed with the rally year and provided once again by Dr Roger and Karen Van Santen. A now-retired dentist, Roger is an IBR vet and he and Karen volunteer at every IBR. Yours truly was using one of these after the 2001 rally and noted to my wife that I liked them, but they were short and hard to hold. She picked up the removeable cover, flipped it around, and attached it to the brush head. She wanted to know why an engineer could not figure out that, in fact, the cover of the toothbrush doubled as the handle extension. Doh! Never tell Lisa Landry about stuff like that, she will never let you forget it. Much to her demented amusement.

As you may know, riders take a lot of photos during the rally but, sadly for them, their camera cards stay with their rally packet in perpetuity. Cindy Gran from Fuzeblock kindly donated a 4GB flash drive for each rider so they would have something on which to transfer copies of their photos. In the interest of full disclosure, I have been using the same Fuzeblock on the last four rally bikes I have built. Great product!

## Big Rocks

Historically, the IBR has been a metaphor for life. Lifestyle coaches recommend scheduling your time, but scheduling does not work if you do not set boundaries which allow you to keep that schedule. Boundary setting boils down to determining what the big rocks are in your life and putting those big rocks in your schedule first.

In the IBR, riders can plan a massive route, including the big rocks first and then adding bonuses to the route to create a higher score. But if they fail to establish some boundaries, spending too much time on the smaller rocks and winding up missing the biggest rocks, they will not be successful. In addition, if they do not build in some cushion to allow for things to go wrong, they are also unlikely to be successful. Some of the most competitive riders tend to be on the bubble, with their calculated cushion being pushed into the penalty zone. The stress can get pretty high when the clock is subtracting points for every minute ticking away.

Creating schedules and setting boundaries are required skills for successful business owners and pilots, two categories of people who tend to do very well in the IBR. Pilots know the first rule is to fly the plane. Riders must be able to ride the bike in all conditions before they can really start devoting time to collecting bonuses. Doing so takes time and practice. Riders who cover the most miles and participate in the most rally events in the year leading up to the IBR tend to do better than riders who do not spend enough time on the bike to make their rally routine second nature.

Your scribe struggled with trying to describe what the ride to the finish feels like and the action which takes place between the final check in and the finish banquet. Finally, it was decided the description in my 2017 report might be the best I could do, given the current shortage of time on my schedule.

An excerpt from the 2017 report, because some things about the IBR do not change:

*“The parking lot at the Marriott was filled with family and friends as the riders completed their longest leg of the rally. Joy, excitement, and palpable relief were all evident on the faces of friends and family as the returning rider’s odometers were recorded by Bob St. George near the front doors of the Marriott.*

...

*As the clock passed 8:00:01 a.m. local time, Bill Thweatt moved his clock-stopping check-in station outside the lobby to the hotel portico to save a few precious seconds for riders arriving inside the 20 point-per-minute penalty window. If you have never tried it, do not discount the pressure of riding all over the country for five long days, covering 5000 or more miles, using every minute available for maximum benefit, while needing to hit a tight, two-hour time window nestled in the heart of a major metropolis. The tiny time-to-arrival window on the GPS screens may as well have been displaying time-to-DNF as they tormented the riders still out on the road at the start of the penalty window.*

*The human brain is an amazing thing. Overwhelming fear and dread can change to elation in mere seconds. Riders, who just 20 minutes earlier may have been wondering if they had enough energy left to hold the bike up at the next red light on the way to the hotel, found themselves elated and energized by the supporters gathered around them shouting a welcoming chorus of cheers. The relief of being ‘done’ removes an unbelievable two years’ worth of weight from exhausted riders.*

...

*As onlookers circulated through the parking lot, some noting with amazement the condition of many of the returning bikes, riders grabbed a few hours of sweet rest. Air-conditioned rooms, hot showers, and comfortable beds were just the ticket to relax, remove days of accumulated sweat and grime, and get recharged in time for the finisher's banquet. No, the exact order of acquiring a room, shower, and bed is not a huge priority when you are that tired.*

...

*The evening of the finisher's banquet in the Marriott was simply amazing. Lisa Landry once again orchestrated a grand event for the riders, starting with a massive portable bar in the pre-function area and moving into a huge banquet room for dinner. The fresh and delicious three course dinner was great and the camaraderie even better. After dessert and coffee, it was time to get down to business, or in this case, awards.*

*Mike, Lisa, and Jeff each took to the podium in turn to entertain, recognize, and appreciate the riders, their families, and supporters. Special recognition and an ovation from everyone was given to the army of generous volunteers who spent hundreds of hours scouting bonuses during the last two years...*

*The community represented by the people in attendance at the banquet is a very small and very special niche in the world of motorcycling. It is a privilege to be a part of it, for many different reasons. In this community, it does not matter if you wear Aerostich, Klim, First Gear, or something else. It does not matter if you ride BMW, Yamaha, Harley, or something else. It does not matter if you are white collar, blue collar, or retired. It does not matter if you have long hair, short hair, red hair, green hair, or no hair. It does not matter if you have great tats or no tats. It does not matter if you are very wealthy or just getting by. It does not matter if you have earned a doctorate or graduated from the school of hard knocks. It does not matter what corner of the world you call home. It does not matter if you prefer to call acts of friendly kindness 'Minnesota Nice' or 'Southern Hospitality'. It only matters that you understand "it". What is "it"? One way to characterize "it" would be simply the lure of riding big miles to see great places while solving intricate puzzles in all kinds of weather, but better descriptions have certainly been penned by the poets among us.*

*Everyone who packed the finisher banquet hall on Friday night seemed to get "it". There were, no doubt, various depths of understanding of "it" in the room, but that did not matter either. Everyone was there to recognize and support the most recent competitors in the IBA's biggest and best event, especially the riders that aspired to become "one of them" and persevered to achieve that goal. Even for accomplished vets of this game, there are few things better than being recognized and applauded for what you love to do. Especially when what you love to do is so far outside what is considered 'normal' by most people. This was a gathering of many of "it" crowd in our community and it was truly a great place to be."*

## **The Top 10**

Piloting a motorcycle over 10,383 miles in 11 days is no small feat. Riding the full length of the Columbia River and the Mississippi River in 11 days is no small feat either. Throw in a nice day hike to Skookumchuck Rapids and do all of those things in 2019 on a motorcycle built in 1983? A motorcycle with carb problems which resulted in a soaked the paper air filter and slowed the bike down to 40 mph until the rider figured out what was happening. With no stock filter available, the rider installed an Under Armour sock in place of the filter and restored the performance. Fortunately, socks come in pairs, as one more filter change was necessary before the end of the rally. Having to overcome such things on a 38-year-old 650cc bike is not unusual. But doing all that and still finishing 10<sup>th</sup> in the IBR is unusual, but it is exactly what Dylan Spink did.

Proving the ability to make sense of a 74 page list of bonuses and find patterns in the noise is a tall order for a rookie. Proving the ability to make an ambitious plan, risking a DNF, and then riding that plan is especially difficult for a rookie. This rider visited both the Ocracoke lighthouse on the North Carolina outer banks and the Montauk lighthouse on the end of a very long Long Island, New York on Leg 1. On Leg 2, he left Kennewick, Washington and made a huge ride to San Luis, Arizona to run the Colorado River back to Moab, Utah before having to temporarily bail on the combo and return to Washington. After collecting big points for sleeping in Kennewick, he resumed the Colorado River run. Not done with rivers, he surfed the Rio Grande from beginning to end. Riding over 12,710 miles, Kevin Gardner is no longer a rookie, with a 9<sup>th</sup> place finish.

Not many riders have selected the Triumph Trophy triple for an IBR mount, but perhaps they should consider it. This one carried its rider deep into the dark, gator infested Florida Everglades on the first night of the rally. On the west coast, it responded to the rider's counter-steering inputs through the slow and twisty Lost Coast and the California Redwoods. Another rookie to complete the Rio Grande combo in the heat of summer, he also took a deep dive into the humid Mississippi Delta to reach Venice, Louisiana. Paul Meyer did not let being a rookie...or going against the grain on choice of mount...keep him out of collecting an 8<sup>th</sup> place finish.

A first leg consisting of scooping up almost everything on his way to Kennewick was something everyone expected from this rider. He rolled the dice on a run to the far north to visit Salmon Glacier, then kept going to collect Valdez, Homer, Whittier, and the railroad spike litter dirt road to the Kennecott Mine at McCarthy, Alaska. During his time in the north, he developed a medical issue and had to stop for treatment. He was not sure at that point if he would be able to continue the rally. The treatment started working and he made a long run back to the lower 48, but was not done with bonus collecting. He turned up the Keeweenaw Peninsula to bushwhack his way to the old rocket range. Overcoming illness, arriving 1 hour and 11 minutes into the penalty points, covering almost 13,000 miles in 11 days on his BMW RT to finish in 7<sup>th</sup> place for 2019 was the only 2-time winner of the IBR, Jim Owen.

The 6<sup>th</sup> place, 5<sup>th</sup> place, 4<sup>th</sup> place, and 2<sup>nd</sup> place riders were all on the big GS and GSA dirt bikes from Bavaria. Possibly the ideal platform for the off the beaten path design of this rally, assuming major mechanical failures could be avoided. Their penchant for rapid unexpected disassembly, a trait which had already reared its ugly head already in this rally for more than one rider, had to be on the minds of these riders as they approached the end of executing their impressive rides.

The 6<sup>th</sup> place rider's plan for the west coast was evidently to wear off the sides of his tires to make up for the drone across country during Leg 1. He covered the Lost Coast, the geographic center of California, and the Lick Observatory. On his return to South Carolina, he collected the Keeweenaw Rocket Range and then somehow still had time to run the entire Mississippi River combination. Covering over 11,529 miles, Billy Connacher grabbed 6<sup>th</sup> place, smiling all the time.

Efficiency does not count, but if it did, this rider would have placed higher than his 5<sup>th</sup> place finish. The only exception to his efficiency might have been the big loop to the south from Kennewick to the San Francisco Bay area and down to Bakersfield, California after visiting Devil's Postpile near Mammoth Lakes and the Bristlecone Pine Forest. He had a hard get off while crossing a stream and destroying a pannier on a submerged rock while going to the Keeweenaw Rocket Range, but overcame a tweaked bike and tweaked back to finish. It may not have seemed all that "efficient" to him at the time, but Eric Bray made it to 5<sup>th</sup> place with "only" 11,066 miles.

The 4<sup>th</sup> place rider started Leg 1 by making a strong start. He went south to Flamingo, Florida, then west to Why, Arizona, then north to Kennewick. His plan for Leg 2 was just as aggressive. He came in on a mission to ride a strong rally and stuck to his plan for 12,352 miles. Craig Brooks earned his 4<sup>th</sup> place finish. Craig noted "The IBR is a hard rally. This was a hard IBR." Well said.

Unlike previous IBR's, there was no "Council of God" interrogation of the top riders this year. Lisa Landry called some of the top riders to come down to the Rally Central to have a "chat" before the start of the finisher's banquet on Friday evening, discussing scoring and other items. The 3<sup>rd</sup> place rider was sleeping when he got call. When Lisa asked him to come downstairs to the staff room, his reply was "I can't, I'm in Canada." Before you laugh, that is completely understandable, as the day before, on Thursday afternoon, he was still trying to get himself off the Gaspé peninsula and back to the states. Before making that run to the far northeast coast, this rookie collected both Ocracoke and Montauk on Leg 1, taken a long hike in British Columbia, trekked to the Lost Coast, and taken a huge side trip to the Keeneewaw Rocket Range before getting turned around short of that bonus. A monster ride by any standards, but 3<sup>rd</sup> place for a rookie with 12,370 miles of riding on his Honda ST1300 must be very sweet for Steve Gallant. Even if he was not sure what country he was in when waking up from a sound sleep in South Carolina.

Was it possible to finish well in this rally without doing a lot of the combination bonuses? Apparently so. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place rider only did the Mississippi River combo. Everything else, the logging roads, the twisty roads, the beat-up pavement, the freezing mountain passes, were all covered chasing stand-alone bonuses. Avoiding the sliced tire issue which cost him almost an entire day in the 2017 IBR and held him to 9<sup>th</sup> place in that rally, Mike Heitkamp covered 11,679 miles in a very efficient manner to earn 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

At this point at the Finisher's Banquet on Friday night, the cheering crowd was drowning out Jeff's announcement of the 2019 winner. What Jeff tried to say, and almost no one heard: "When you look up epic ride in the dictionary, you should be directed to this rider's Spot track. She did nearly a full lap of the U.S. and Canada. Starting with Flamingo, Florida, and Why, Arizona, she then rolled up to run the Columbia River, hike to Skookumchuck, cross to Vancouver Island for Port Hardy, stop back in Kennewick Sunday night for big points, then back across the breadth of the continent to the Gaspé Peninsula. And by the way, she visited Acadia National Park and Mt. Washington for extra grins on her Thursday return to the finish." With a massive 12,998.9 mile, brilliantly executed ride on a well-worn Yamaha FJR1300 (finishing its 5<sup>th</sup> IBR), Wendy Crockett became the first woman to win of the Iron Butt Rally.

It was noted earlier in this report that Wendy and Ian were at the Gaspé bonus together. What was not mentioned, was Ian skipped the return to Kennewick and should have had about an 8-hour lead on Wendy, who did return to Kennewick for the big points there. For her to make up that time deficit and reach the mouth of the St. Lawrence at the same time as Ian was quite a feat, but having that extra rest in the Kennewick hotel no doubt helped.

For some perspective on the points and magnitude of Wendy's win, only 9079 points separated 5<sup>th</sup> place from 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Wendy was in a class by herself with a gap of 10,438 points above 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Some keyboard rider on Facebook claimed Wendy put a stake through the heart of Jeff with her ride. He could not have been more mistaken. We expected the top riders would all be close, within a few points. That is one of the reasons for the many small gas receipt bonuses, to serve as potential tie breakers. No one, not even Jeff, had any idea what the winning path would be or who would be able to pull it off. There were just so many ways to get to a winner level combination of points. So many paths, each just as good as the next. For one rider to figure out a sequence to amass over 10,000 more points than the very strong second place effort was amazing. Then to be able to ride that route and execute the critical timing necessary to pull it off was masterful. Contrary to feeling a stake through his chest, Jeff's heart was full of pride for Wendy and her ability to solve his puzzle. Impressive just does not do her ride justice.

## **Aftermath**

IBR vets Maura Gatensby and Cliff Wall did not return to the finish in time. Chris Rooney was trying to complete unfinished business and become a finisher, but bit off too much and sadly, still has unfinished business. Everyone was pleased to see all three of them back in time for the banquet.



2017 IBR vet Eric Buskell did not make it back from the far north in time for the banquet. The now famous/infamous “Homer”, previously known as the Crazy One Eyed Biker, was planning to get his Harley repaired and enjoy the trip back to the lower 48. He may not have added another IBR finish to his resume, but his rally will forever be part of IBR lore.

Chris "the Kaz" Kasdorf had a good ride on his ST1300. At the banquet Lisa called on him come up and collect his van keys (we keep keys to vehicles left at the host hotel in case they are needed while the rider is on the rally) and in the confusion, missed calling Chris back to the podium as a finisher. Chris was a great sport about our mix up and, with his 3-digit number earned, we look forward to following his future IBR efforts.

There were 24 DNF’s, which is representative of the challenge of competing in the premier long distance rally. If it was easy to become a finisher, it would not be the challenge the biggest and best rally should be. Those who DNF’ed deserve credit for attempting the challenge, as they are far ahead of the masses who will never put themselves on the starting line to try. Hopefully, they will get another chance to ride and finish the “Big Dance”.

We cannot cover all the individual stories from the rally, so we will join the rest of the IBR fans in looking forward to the riders sharing their experiences online over the next few weeks as they decompress and reflect on their adventures. The reports written by the riders themselves will no doubt be more detailed and riveting than anything your scribe could relate second, or third, or fourth hand. We will leave you to their FB posts, blogs, lists, forums, and if you are very lucky, a barstool right next to them, to get the full scoop on some awesome ride stories.

There will be spreadsheets of parsed data as minute aspects of all phases of the rally are scrutinized. Such detailed analysis is interesting and, at times, useful and fun. It certainly beats reading darksider tire threads on the forums all day long and twice on Sunday. There will be statistical manipulation to try and support certain brand loyalty viewpoints. There will be riders citing how well they did with points-per-mile, which is a fun metric and shows a level of efficiency for the rider, but it is meaningless for the IBR. Jeff Earls has noted on more than one occasion the important metric for the IBR is points-per-hour.

However, the lasting impact of the rally on the individual riders and how their experience changes them is perhaps the most interesting aspect. It is, after all, the rider, not the bike. Just entering the rally is a declaration of choosing to take the road less traveled. Routing a path to achieve a finish, then successfully riding that path, makes all the difference.

The scoring audit found one rider who had not been given the correct number of points for a claimed bonus.

Revised finisher table:

Placing	First Name	Last Name	Score	Mileage	Year	Make	Model	Medal
1	Wendy	Crockett	153086	12998.9	2005	Yamaha	FJR1300	GOLD
2	Mike	Heitkamp	143648	11679.5	2015	BMW	R1200GSA	GOLD
3	Steve	Gallant	142178	12370.4	2012	Honda	ST1300	GOLD
4	Craig	Brooks	137263	12352.1	2011	BMW	R1200GS	GOLD
5	Eric	Bray	134569	11066.4	2015	BMW	R1200GSA	GOLD
6	Billy	Connacher	131692	11529.8	2016	BMW	R1200GSA	GOLD
7	James	Owen	126485	12936.1	2018	BMW	R1200RT	GOLD
8	Paul	Meyer	124884	11810.5	2015	Triumph	Trophy	GOLD
9	Kevin	Gardner	122216	12710.7	2008	Honda	Goldwing	GOLD
10	Dylan	Spink	119729	10383.7	1983	Honda	Silverwing	GOLD

11	Daniel	Roth	119316	10530.4	2011	BMW	R1200GSA	GOLD
12	Brian	Nuehring	118288	10347.9	2014	Yamaha	FJR1300	GOLD
13	Michael	Best	117420	10530.1	2018	Honda	Goldwing	GOLD
14	Kenneth	Andrews	117122	10573.7	2019	HD	Road Glide	GOLD
15	Lewis	Ballard	116843	10218.3	2018	HD	Ultra LTD	GOLD
16	Bob	Bowman	115603	10333.6	2007	Honda	ST1300	GOLD
17	Jon	Kerr	112066	10837.7	2018	Honda	Goldwing	SILVER
18	Corey	Nuehring	113788	10330.1	2014	Yamaha	FJR1300	SILVER
19	Justin	Long	113690	9543.7	2015	Yamaha	FJR1300	SILVER
20	Marc	Beaulac	112733	9967.3	2006	Honda	Goldwing	SILVER
21	Lyle	Monroe	111952	10174.6	2014	Honda	Goldwing	SILVER
22	Peter	Green	111837	13314.0	2013	Triumph	Trophy	SILVER
23	Andy	Mackey	111441	9953.9	2009	BMW	R1200GSA	SILVER
24	Eric	Jewell	111229	10511.2	2012	Honda	ST1300	SILVER
25	Robert	Carlo	110228	10806.1	2011	HD	Road Glide	SILVER
26	Kevin/Lynda	Weller	110015	9485.4	2014	Yamaha	Super Tenere	SILVER
27	Mike	Myren	108668	10128.2	2015	Yamaha	FJR1300	SILVER
28	Joe	Green	107046	10307.8	2016	BMW	R1200GS	SILVER
29	Jim/Lisa	Winterer / Erbes	106430	9354.2	2008	Yamaha	FJR1300	SILVER
30	James	Burriss	106410	10025.2	2013	Victory	CC Tour	SILVER
31	Danny C.	Dossman	105608	10013.5	2016	BMW	R1200GSA	SILVER
32	Ron	Messick	105338	9741.2	2014	Yamaha	FJR1300	SILVER
33	Eric/Shirley	Chernin / Davis	102893	9041.0	2012	Honda	Goldwing	BRONZE
34	Connie	Gabrick	102882	9504.1	2009	Victory	Vision	BRONZE
35	Angelo	Patacca	102821	8932.8	2015	BMW	R1200GSA	BRONZE
36	Jesse	Lucas	102147	10262.3	2013	Yamaha	FJR1300	BRONZE
37	Ian	McPhee	101676	11781.4	2000	BMW	R1100RT	BRONZE
38	Ken	Aman	101617	12842.0	2016	Yamaha	FJR1300	BRONZE
39	Bucky	Dent	100242	9727.0	2014	Yamaha	Super Tenere	BRONZE
40	Greg	Rice	99866	11221.2	2019	BMW	R1200GSA	BRONZE
41	Paul	Slaton	99721	9216.5	2006	Yamaha	FJR1300	BRONZE
42	Greg	Dennett	96838	9308.0	2002	Honda	ST1100	BRONZE
43	Chris	Comly	95787	9068.1	2006	HD	Sportster	BRONZE
44	Merril	Campbell	95710	9781.9	2014	KTM	Adv 1190	BRONZE
45	Kurt	Worden	93918	9540.5	2017	Kawasaki	Versys	
46	Ken	Cowart	93917	10782.1	2019	HD	Road Glide	
47	Chris	Kasdorf	93657	9913.9	2005	Honda	ST1300	
48	Greg	Fizer	92852	9686.6	2014	Honda	Goldwing	
49	Lynda	Lahman	92305	9878.1	2018	Honda	Africa Twin	
50	Terry	Lahman	92289	9895.0	2017	Honda	Africa Twin	
51	Robert	Lightner	91831	9691.7	2013	BMW	K1600GT	
52	Andrew	Byrd	91164	9630.2	2012	Kawasaki	Concours	
53	Nancy	Lefcourt	89457	9050.1	2013	BMW	R1200RT	
54	Steve	Snell	89067	9494.8	2017	Honda	Goldwing	
55	James	Epley	88274	10040.9	2015	Triumph	Trophy	
56	Bruce	Edwards	87880	10346.8	2017	BMW	R1200RT	
57	Chuck	Lackey	87238	9094.7	2008	Yamaha	FJR1300	
58	Cathy	Davies	86295	9641.7	2001	Honda	Goldwing	

59	Michael	Baker	85896	9342.6	2015	BMW	R1200GSA	
60	Martin	Cover	85512	9576.6	2016	BMW	K1600GTL	
61	Lisa	Cover Rufo	85512	9585.8	2016	BMW	R1200GSA	
62	Benny	Watz	84878	8235.8	2019	HD	Ultra Glide	
63	Martin/Rebecca	Little / McCallum	84607	8549.5	2007	BMW	R1200RT	
64	Jeffrey	Gebler	84590	9844.2	2010	Honda	Goldwing	
65	Don	Duck	83944	8886.5	2014	Triumph	Trophy	
66	Wolfe	Bonham	82759	9654.8	2003	BMW	R1150GSA	
67	William (Bill)	Cumbie	82617	8904.0	2018	Honda	Goldwing	
68	Steve/Micki	Diederich / Denton	82347	9270.6	2013	Honda	Goldwing	
69	Roy	Kjendal	69966	10231.6	2016	BMW	K1600GTL	
70	John	Coons	44574	9534.0	1994	BMW	R1100RSL	
71	JD	Smith	40211	8871.6	2015	BMW	R1200GSA	
DNF	Margaret	Pearl	69101	9433.5	2007	BMW	R1200GSA	
DNF	Stephen/Tamara	Vook	67644	9169.9	2012	BMW	K1600GTL	
DNF	Patrick	Smith	63046	9232.5	2019	HD	Ultra Limited	
DNF	Mark	Starrett	62362	8433.8	2006	Honda	Goldwing	
DNF	Paul	Partin	36980	7910.7	2008	Honda	Goldwing	
DNF	Chris	Purney	35312	8905.8	2016	Yamaha	Super Tenere	
DNF	Eric	Buskell	28809	4997.6	2019	HD	Road Glide	
DNF	Marc	Bialt	21641	4371.2	2017	BMW	R1200GS	
DNF	Chris	Rooney	19308	4780.5	2017	Yamaha	FJR1300	
DNF	Greg	Farmer	19016	3772.6	2016	Honda	Goldwing	
DNF	Joe	Fisher	18855	3587.8	2006	Honda	ST1300	
DNF	Gregg	Lenentine	18809	4206.3	2010	Yamaha	FJR1300	
DNF	Kit	Chunhawong	18152	4051.9	2013	Yamaha	FJR1300	
DNF	John/Nadine	Huval	17943	3779.0	2016	Honda	Goldwing	
DNF	Cliff	Wall	13375	3001.8	2014	Yamaha	Super Tenere	
DNF	Mike	Riley	13330	3338.0	2012	Kawasaki	Concours14	
DNF	Don	Stadtler	12694	3472.8	2008	HD	Softtail	
DNF	Maura	Gatensby	12489	3270.7	2012	Honda	ST1300	
DNF	Eric	Edelman	10547	3395.9	2018	BMW	K1600B	
DNF	Michiel	Kerkhof	0	0.0	2014	HD	Ultra Limited	
DNF	Andrew	Hall	0	0.0	2013	Honda	Goldwing	
DNF	Lonnie	McCoy	0	0.0	2018	BMW	R1200GSA	
DNF	Jerald	Anderson	0	0.0	1974	Suzuki	GT750	
DNF	Thomas	Spearman	0	0.0	2013	BMW	K1600GTL	
DNF	Michael	Moore	0	0.0	2018	Honda	Goldwing	

One more excerpt from the 2017 report, since it also applies to every IBR:

*“The next phase of the rally starts now. Oh, you thought the rally was over? Technically, yes, it has ended. But the after effects have not, at least for many of the participants. They will react in different ways, but it will likely affect them for a long time. Perhaps those who pushed their personal envelopes the most are likely to have the strongest reactions.*”

*The focus needed to place well in the IBR is difficult to describe to someone who has never experienced it. It results in a level of detachment, which can make it seem as if the entire world has stopped for eleven days. The evening news reports designed to generate hysteria and hand-wringing have no influence. The closest most riders get to news reports during the rally is the regional weather forecast. Work-place issues and project deadlines are forgotten. Broken toilets at home become someone else's problem. What arrived in the mail is irrelevant, unless it is a package at the next checkpoint containing a needed spare part or fresh change of clothes. The entire focus becomes the road, the plan, and the clock.*

*Emerging from that depth of focus can be unsettling. For the next few weeks, some will jump up from deep sleep, convinced that they are about to miss a bonus time cutoff. Some will rethink poor routing choices and marvel at how they could miss what now seems so obvious after a good night's rest removed their fatigue induced tunnel vision. Some will focus anew on better ways to prep their machines, or consider changing to a different machine, perhaps one better suited to the task of multi-day rallies.*

*Some may seek solace by writing down what they felt or went through during the last 72 brutal hours of the rally, just to make sure they never forget what it was like to reach so far and dig so deep. Some will resolve to push themselves harder if given another opportunity. A few may decide that this was enough. Some may have difficulty coping with delving so deep into their psyche, looking into the ultimate window of their soul, especially if they still have the proverbial monkey on their back. But many riders will be quietly pleased with the strength and fortitude they discovered within themselves and their ability to rely on it to persevere through their darkest hours.*

*Some will even feel depressed afterwards, in spite of experiencing great joy at the finish. It comes not from anything that went wrong, but as a result of coming off the emotional rush of being in the company of so many like-minded riders, or just the incredible high of finally becoming "one of them". Such fleeting moments of success and ecstasy make great memories, while at the same time making a return to the routine of the everyday world a bit of a letdown. No worries, it is a rather common emotion and things will return to a more even keel soon enough.*

*To those who did achieve their goals, congratulations. To those who did not reach your goals, best wishes for a quick recovery and hopefully another chance."*

It will be time to start preparing for the 2021 IBR in just a few short months. Hopefully all the riders who plan to submit entries for the 2021 Iron Butt Rally will keep these words of wisdom at the forefront of their thoughts and plans. Doing so, along with choosing the road less traveled, will make all the difference.

*John Harrison  
IBR Scribe  
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