

## 2003 GLMC Buffalo Run

Introduction

The Beginning

Over Labor Day weekend of 2003, we took part in the Buffalo Run Motorcycle Rally put on by the Glacial Lakes Motorcycle Club in South Dakota. The 12 hour Rally started and ended in Milbank, SD, home of Lisa's Dad - aka my father-in-law. Rallies like this aren't group rides, but are more like scavenger hunts, where you're given a list of places to go to get bonus points towards winning the rally. This isn't a race - speed doesn't guarantee a win - good planning does.

We left on Saturday afternoon for Milbank, myself, Ron, Carrie, Lisa (riding 2-up with Ron, since she won't ride on the back of my bike, which in this case was good), and Kerry aka "P" We got into town and met up with the participants and had a big dinner at the City Limits bar and grill, followed by a bonfire at "Bob 498s" farm. This was my first of gravel on the rally - something that would come back to haunt me.

Rally Day

We got up early the next morning for the rider's meeting at 7, where they hand out the bonus locations. While many riders looked over the bonuses and took off, thanks to Ron's laptop and GPS skills, we took the risk of staying 30 minutes past the start time of 8 am, entering GPS waypoints to efficiently plan the route. This paid off in the end.

There were two possible basic routes for big points. One took you out west to Mobridge, SD, where a lot of bonuses were located in a short amount of space. The other involved visiting two radio-TV towers, one in North Dakota, and one in South Dakota. We chose the latter, with many bonus locations in between.

And they're off!

We set off from Milbank, communicating by CB radio, visiting such metropolises as Victor, SD, Peever, SD (where Lisa and her friends used to sneak into the bar as college freshmen), Sisseton, SD, where we had to climb a tower to count the steps (we made Lisa do it, since she wasn't driving), Christine, ND, where we had to visit a Bison ranch, and then on to Fargo, where Lisa, Ron, P and myself all went to college.

The bonus in Fargo was Hooters restaurant, where you had to buy a souvenir, and you got bonus points if you got one of the lovely waitresses (Hooters Girls) to pose on your bike for a photo. We got that bonus, but not the one that you got if you brought her back with you! When Bob asked me at the scoring table why she didn't come back with me, I answered that since helmets were required, and I didn't have an extra one, I'd have been DQ'ed. (he said I should have had another helmet...)



Confusion sets in...

After that it was on to the first of the TV towers in Galesburg, ND. (You had to go to both to get the bonus). We ran into some problems here.

First of all, the GPS routed us onto a cowpath of a road. To call it gravel would be generous - this was all rocks and sand.

When we got to the end of the road, we saw TWO towers. Uh oh - which was the right one? The tower we were looking for

was the KVLV-TV tower - at 2063 ft., the tallest

structure in North America. I noticed that the sign on the door had different call letters, but I also knew that the station had changed its call letters after I left Fargo, and since the sign was ancient, I figured nobody had changed it.

We went to the closest one and all took our photos. As we were about to leave, some kids on 4-wheelers rode up. They asked what we were doing, and we told them, and we asked if this was the tallest tower. They weren't too sure, but they thought the other one was taller. As Homer Simpson might say, "D'oh!" We figured we'd better not chance it and rode to the other tower, about 2 miles away, but we killed 30 minutes with the confusion. Sure enough, the second one was taller, by 3 whole feet. Good thing we went to the other tower.

We headed back south, towards the ultimate goal of reaching the second bonus tower in Garden City, SD. We stopped for bonuses in Erie, ND (where there was once a bank, and it's always 10 degrees according to the thermometer), and Lisbon, ND. Lisbon is the hometown of my good friend Dave, who sang in the band shoot lucy with me for seven years. He always gave me grief for not ever going there to drink in college. Well, now I've been to Lisbon - so there! We stopped there for gas and food, and then visited the Vets hometo look for the manufacturer of the tank out front. Lisa commented that in all our riding gear, we looked like we were attacking the tank in a battle. She was right - we did look like soldiers!

Next stop was Britton, SD, where we had to visit the courthouse and find out the names of the people a monument was dedicated to. The thing was, there were no names on the monument. Talk about confusing! We struggled with this for a while, and just wrote down what was engraved on the stone. Turns out, the answer was "none." P took a photo in case there was a discrepancy (he was a rallymaster in the MN1K, so he knows his stuff), and off we went to find a cemetery named Detroit.

As the Ankle Turns

After that, we headed to a town called Verdon - population 7. Yes, 7.

Here we had to look at an old building that was supposedly an opera house. How an opera house could exist with only 7 people in town, I'm not quite sure. The town was on a dirt road off the main highway, and it was here that the whole gravel thing came to haunt me.

I was the last of the four of us in line leaving Verdon, and approaching the main highway, I looked left to see if a car was far enough for me to pull out. At this point, I can't say for sure what happened, but I accelerated slightly, to pull out, and the sand below me just gave way. I felt the rear wheel slip out, and the bike start to go down on the left side. I was only going 5 mph or so at this point, so I thought I could catch the bike before it dropped, but no such luck. I felt the bike slip more, and to avoid getting my leg crushed, I jumped low side off the bike and took a tumble.

A huge cloud of dust erupted, and I went crashing into the gravel. Ouch - that hurt. I got up, and my ankle was really sore, but I could walk. (so were my ribs and my hip for that matter). The group saw it, and rode back to help. I needed P to help me lift the bike up as the combination of my ankle and the dirt road made it impossible for me to do it alone. We checked everything out, and except for a crack in the front cowling, everything looked okay. Thankfully I had crash bars on the bike to protect the engine and fairing and they worked really well, collapsing, but preventing damage to the bike itself. The bike was flooded, so it took a bit to start, but we got going again.

### The Home Stretch

On we went, though it hurt to shift at this point. We stopped for a quick bonus in Conde, and then on to the second tower in Garden City. We took the shortest route (GPS should have built in road condition info!) , on what may have been the single worst road I've ever seen. Technically, the road was closed, and most of it had washed away from the waves of the lake that the road ran through the middle of. In addition, you had to make a 90 degree turn in the middle of this lake, and deal with about 200 seagulls that lived on the road. Not fun.

Then, when we got to the tower - THERE WERE TWO TOWERS AGAIN! There's a reason why rallymasters may be the most cursed people on earth. This time we figured out the right tower right away, and headed back to Milbank with a quick gas stop in Watertown, making it with 15 minutes to spare - that's cutting it fairly close.

Now it was scoring time. We added up our points, and knew we'd done pretty well. Unfortunately in the confusion of the monument in Britton, P forgot to record the time and his odometer reading, so he lost those points. Still, we knew we were all in the running for awards.

### Awards!

First up was 2-up class, which Ron and Lisa won fairly easily. Wow - Lisa gets wood in her first rally! I was jealous! Then they went through the standard and funky class awards, and handed out some nifty door prizes (I got a tie-dyed Milbank T-shirt - sorry Critter!)

Then they announced another award - the Efficiency award. This went to the rider with the most points per mile for the rally.

Points per mile, or PPM is also used as a tiebreaker if two people have the same number of points. They announced it, and Carrie won it with 12.5 ppm or so. I kind of figured what was was going to happen next.

They announced the winners in Touring Class, and sure enough, I got second place. This was because I registered more ppm (12.8), than Carrie (remember that tiebreaker), because my odometer reads slightly slower than hers. Because we rode together the exact same route, I did feel pretty bad about it, because really, all of us had the same actual PPM. Those are the rally rules though, so we had to abide. Plus, Carrie did get wood too, so that was cool.

The Aftermath.

They headed out to Bob's for another bonfire, but Lisa and I stayed back as I had to ice my now-bloated ankle. I also had to make plans in case I couldn't ride back in the morning (meaning I couldn't fit my boot over my ankle). I did end up riding back though on the ankle, and went in that afternoon for X-rays. The doctor seemed amazed that I rode about 300 miles with my ankle like that, but I didn't think it to be strange. I had to get home, didn't I? Anyway, the X-rays showed that I broke my left fibula, which is the small outside bone of your ankle that doesn't support weight. Now I have to hobble around in a big ugly cast for six weeks! When I get done with the cast, it's going on the wall next to my plaque in the garage as a separate trophy - I just hope it's healed in time for the Bonzai run in the spring!

