



2007 MNLD Riders Unplugged Rally

Earlier this summer, I received an email from Kerry Person asking me to design a logo for a new 12 hr. rally the MNLD Riders were putting on. The rally was called the Unplugged Rally, the catch being that no extra fuel, GPS units, or computers were going to be allowed. This sounded like a blast to me, so I was naturally the first one to sign up.

The rally was planned for mid-September, starting and ending in Monticello, MN. While Monticello is only about 30 miles from my house, I chose to get a motel room in order to get some extra sleep on the front end, and also so I could enjoy the party afterwards and not have to drive.

I headed up after work on Friday, to the River Rock bar and grill, where all the riders were meeting. The usual pre-rally BS was going on, and then it was time to go check into the motel. I chose the cheapest motel in town, seeing as I was staying two nights, and cheap it was. This was probably the second worst motel I've ever stayed in (see the last night of my Butt Lite report for the worst). The guy at the desk (who looked EXACTLY like Apu from the Simpsons, right down to the turban) had my reservation all wrong, there was some sleazy bar with loud karaoke going on down the hall, and the room smelled like mold. To make matters worse, I spent over an hour screwing around with my new helmet, trying to get the headset in right. (I know, I know - don't change things right before rallies).

The next morning we all met back at the River Rock to receive our route sheets. It was a fairly cold day, and I had the electrics on and all my warm stuff. It was a little weird to be routing entirely without any GPS assistance. On the flip side, it also was rather quick and easy. I plotted what I thought was a good route, though in reality, I had no idea how long it would be. I did have a lot of drop out points if need be, if time was short. This is where GPS really helps, in knowing your estimated time back to a location. In keeping with the Unplugged theme, all the bonuses were related to bands and musicians. As a musician myself, I loved this!

My route started with three stops out near Lake Minnetonka, not far from where I work. One was on an island, where apparently Bonnie Raitt recorded an album (I can't stand Bonnie Raitt), one was a monument to the Andrews Sisters, and one was at the location of the old Excelsior Amusement park, where the Rolling Stones once played, and legend has it, a local character was the inspiration for "Mr. Jimmy" in the song "You Can't Always Get What You Want."

My next stop was in New Ulm, home of my Dad's family, and the last resting place of Polka legend "Whoopee John." This was an easy one, as I'd been here before.

Then it was on to Fairmont, MN to get a fuel receipt. Fairmont was the home of one of the members of the Castaways, who had a number 12 hit in 1965 with "Liar Liar."

A fairly quick trip down I-90 took me to Albert Lea to see a monument to Rockabilly legend Eddie Cochrane, who was born there. This was a major pain, because the bonus required you to get a photo of your bike with the monument. This proved difficult, because the monument was set way back from the road. I had to drive up on the sidewalk, and take about four pictures, while trying to keep my bike from falling over. What a mess. I did get the picture however.

My next stop was Clear Lake, IA to visit the Surf Ballroom, site of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper's last ever show. I'd never seen the Surf, so I was really looking forward to this. In an odd twist of events, our band shoot Lucy, actually ended up getting to play there a couple months later! How cool is that? In addition, Clear Lake allowed me to get a receipt from a Casey's store, to get another bunch of bonus points.

It was here however, that I made my only big mistake on the rally. I chose to ride to Clarion, IA, about 35 miles south, to pick up some big points at the grave of Glen Buxton, Alice Cooper's bass player. I'd been there on a MN1000, so I knew where it was, but in hindsight, I should have gone back into MN and worked my way through some other bonuses that added together, would have given me more points with fewer miles. Instead, I rode the 70 mile round trip to Clarion.

This left me with very little time to pick up my last bonus in Austin, MN, home of the Gear Daddies (who we actually opened for at the Surf - more odd coincidence...). The bonus was to buy something at the Spam museum (always a popular rally bonus), and I made it just before closing.

I had to make a quick gas stop, and then fly back to Monticello for the end of the rally. This is where a GPS REALLY would have helped. Fortunately, there wasn't much traffic through the cities, and I made it with 15 minutes or so to spare. Pretty good timing.

I ended up coming in 6th in the rally, which was pretty good considering my last few rallies have been pretty bad from a placing standpoint, and I managed to ride 627 miles in 12 hours - the second most mileage of any finisher. I was pretty happy with my results - I didn't completely screw anything up, and was competitive. Plus, this was one of the most fun rallies I've ridden. Great weather, great bonuses, just a good time altogether. I hope it becomes an annual tradition. Good job guys!