

XL4IBR take two!

So it seems like only a few months ago I finished the 2005 Iron Butt Rally. And all of a sudden the 2007 rally is here and gone. After the Sportster had a catastrophic failure a day and a half from the finish in 2005 I became even more determined to be the first to finish the IBR on it... We found that in 05 the front rod bearing let loose, suspect part was the cage for the roller bearing may have lost the hardness causing it to slowly disintegrate. Harley-Davidson wanted to pay the dealership to rebuild it, but I felt it was more important to finish it on a stock factory motor... so after some sweet talking and a couple of phone calls H-D decided to go along with my request and sent me a new in the box motor, we sent the old one in and the new one arrived with the appropriate motor numbers and such... We installed the accessories and such that I had used in the original motor, a Buell 36amp 3 phase alternator and regulator, a H-D accessory oil cooler, and we added this time a K&N replacement air filter. Other changes from stock include longer shocks from Progressive Suspension, sport model forks which offer better damping and are slightly longer as well, and it also has different gearing which is a smaller rear belt pulley and shorter belt.

The gadgets and accessories... For the 05 rally I had called Happy-Trails and they set me up with the necessary parts to fabricate my own pannier mounts, and for 07 I opted for some smaller panniers to save weight and reduce size. I also decided to redo my auxiliary fuel tank for 2007 making it flatter and there for lowering the center of gravity, I also lost the top box that I had used previously, again to lose excess weight and size. Gadget upgrades for 2007 were pretty minimal; I again decided to use the Garmin 2610 mainly for familiarity and for a couple of features that I understand are not available on the newer models. The audio system I used I kept for 07, J&M cb/integrator, which pipes the audio from the new this time HD road tech XM radio, the Garmin, and the Valentine One radar detector, and my phone which operated through the new J&M blue tooth system! Very sweet! In 2004/5 in preparation for the original run at the IBR I had mounted a bar to a set of detachable windshied mounts and on those same pieces I also made mounting space for a set of VERY high powered KC daylighter driving lights. Because I had mounted a FXDXT fairing on the bike I had to cut holes in that but the fairing also provided mounting space for the ballasts for the HID lights and the J&M audio components to say nothing about all the wiring needed for such gadgets. Also new for this year was a set of heated grips from H-D. The things that I didn't change, the seat from Rick Mayer, the tank bag from Linda T. and pegs. But enough about the bike let's get to the most important part, the ride!

After being overly prepared for my first IBR in 2005 I was very ill prepared for this rally. Going through what has turned into an ugly divorce, my family selling off part of the business, my son graduating from high school, and starting up a satellite store in Brainerd I've had a little stress and distraction going on. I knew that I had to do the rally as I needed to be someplace for an extended period of time where I couldn't think about all the crap in my life, and I would just have to concentrate on the task at hand. As it got down to the last couple of months I was scrambling to get everything ready, again making sure that UPS and FedEx would not be going out of business anytime soon. I found out just a week or so before that one of my fellow Minnesota riders had to withdraw for personal reasons which put another MN rider without transport to the start and back from the finish. So in short order I switched trailers that I was using to transport to make room for Marty Leir and his GS, I was really excited to have someone

along on the drive. After getting to St.Louis we got checked in, and unloaded the bikes. After that it is meetings, interviews, forms, tech, odometer checks, and then sit and wait. Sunday night at the end of the starting banquet they hand out our first bonus list, 38 pages! HOLY CRAP! I knew it was going to be a big rally pack but OMG! Talk about feeling overwhelmed, I did not have the mental where with all to handle this on my own, I was fortunate enough to have a rally veteran that was willing to help me plan my routes, so after long discussions and throwing different ideas out, we came up with the first leg plan. Contrary to just about every 'big gun' we decided to go south and east, by calculations it gave me a 90,000 point first leg with plenty of rest just about every night, which has always proved to be an important factor as the points go up exponentially toward the end of the rally, BUT Key West has almost always been a 'sucker' bonus, but looking at the points vs. the miles, and sleep time, knowing how long the rally is it seemed like the smart ride to do! Time will tell...

The first leg route took me right to the gateway arch which was a 2 part bonus, get a picture of the 'builders' display inside, and also get a receipt from the arch parking garage. That taken care of I tried to head out of town, the GPS thought I was on the elevated freeway when I was on the city streets, so after making a wrong turn and ending up back at the arch parking garage I followed the signs to the freeway and got out of St. Louis. Not the best way to start a rally, driving around in circles in downtown St. Louis, I finally said fuck you betty I am following the signs, that betty is such a bitch, always telling me where to go, although MOST times she is right... (Betty is the voice from the GPS). From there it was to the southern tip of Illinois to a town called Metropolis, yes like the town in "superman" and how appropriate that in Metropolis I need to get a picture of the Superman statue. From there a short ride across the river to Paducah Kentucky to get a photo of a motorcycle mural on the flood wall down town, little did I know that it was a Harley Owners Group Mural, kind of funny that on this rally there are only 3 H-D's running. While I am hanging my flag on the bike and trying to take a photo, a man definitely not from this country stopped to offer to take my photo, he barely spoke enough English to understand what I was trying to accomplish and then insisted that he take a photo with HIS camera that he would email me later, which I did not receive now that I think about it. After that it was on to Nashville, where there are three bonus locations and a small bonus for getting a fuel receipt from Nashville, first was the Opryland hotel, since I'd been there recently I knew that the if I went into the main entrance I would find one of the signs that reads 'cascades' for the photo I needed. It was rather humorous watching all the faces at the main entrance, me in my Aerostich and helmet walking briskly into the hotel just leaving my bike near the entrance, a short hike inside and the help from someone that obviously read the memo about the hotel being a bonus location, eagerly grabbed my camera and snapped a photo, or did he hold the flag? Hmmm guess it doesn't matter now I got the points for it! After that it was head for down town to the original location of the 'Grand Ole Opry' Ryman auditorium where I had to take a photo of the historic marker showing the 'birthplace of bluegrass' on the way I did fuel up. I never really liked Nashville, but it was sure nice having been down town a month or so before for the H-D dealer meeting! It made navigating down there a piece o cake. From Ryman I went to the Parthenon, not sure what it is but it I found out it is a pretty big building. I felt pretty silly when I asked some people in the park near the Parthenon for directions and they pointed to this HUGE building... Oh well... after that it was off to some of the prettiest countryside on leg one, the Natchez trace parkway to take a photo of a bridge, then trying not to waste any time run down to Birmingham for the Boy Scouts Statue of Liberty replica, then to Leeds AL for the Barber

motor sports museum, really cutting it close on time I struggled to get a decent photo as it was a 'daylight' bonus, with no decent daylight in the photo I stopped at the convenience store just a few miles up the road and got a receipt to document I was in the area at an appropriate time. As night fell I found that my main HID which I use for lo beam is not doing so well flashes off sporadically, GREAT! That's all I need major electrical failure on day one! So after I got some photos at Barber I checked some connections wiggled some wires and hoped for the best, seemed to help for that night anyway, stay tuned on that issue... From there it was a run to Atlanta, stopping at Talladega to get a photo of the entrance to the super speedway. In Atlanta I had to really scramble to get to the 'varsity' drive in by 11:30 for a receipt and a hat, flying eta on the GPS was putting me in the parking lot with 1 minute to spare! Then a wrong turn! You can only imagine what was said inside that helmet! I got there just as the door locked but got a car hop to get me a coke! Eddie and Lisa were hanging out there and were kind enough to invite me to sack out at her place. And Lisa bless her heart warmed up a plate of dinner for me, I had a hot shower, and sack time! Day one in the bag! And only a couple brain farts, and one potential mechanical issue... not much of an exciting story on day one, but as the rally progresses, and the mind fatigues, the storys get better... writing this months later I only hope I can remember it all =;^)