

## **Grady's 2-up 2003 UTAH 1088!**

I've run the Utah 1088 for the last three years and had a lot of fun and been plenty challenged. This year the initial plan was to use the 1088 as a warm-up for the Iron Butt and have a chance to ride with Dick Fish who I was planning riding the IBR with.

All of that changed early this spring when the love of my life finally decided that she was ready for a relationship. We dated for a month and a half and I proposed on 9 May and a wedding was planned for September 27th. It was going to be a busy summer, I was sure of that. I was not going to have enough vacation time to take a honeymoon, go on a horseback riding trip to the Black hills and ride the IBR. A quick check of the priorities and the IBR fell to the bottom, besides I really couldn't swing the cost of running it with everything else even if I could find the time.

I got an email from Steve Chalmers a couple days after I had made the decision not to ride the IBR and he generously offered a free couple entry into the 1088 as a wedding gift. Now this was a great idea I thought. I just knew I couldn't ride it two-up on the R1. But, the FJR was a possibility and I knew that Bill Gillespie was riding solo this year so he was not going to be riding the Goldwing that has done so well on that event in the past for him and Becky. I gave them a call and they agreed to let Jill and I use the Goldwing, if I could talk Jill into this crazy idea.

I gave Jill a call and asked if there was any possibility of her getting a couple days off of work to fly out to Salt Lake City and go on a motorcycle ride with me. I told her a little bit about the plan and the bike that I had lined up so she would be able to make the ride. The longest ride she had been on up to this point was about 125 miles to dinner with some friends and back on the FJR. I told her that all we needed to do was ride at least 1088 miles and we could even get four or five hours of sleep during the night. We really didn't need to try to go out and win anything, all I wanted to do was finish and have fun. Excited about the upcoming event, I ordered the airline ticket for her to fly out to Salt Lake on Thursday night for the barbeque and fly

back to Minneapolis on Monday morning.

About a month later, I ended up lining up the time off to go to Colorado to look for a house for my new assignment to Colorado Springs the week prior to the 1088. I talked to Jill and she was able to take the week off of work and we made new plans to ride the FJR to Denver, stay with Bill & Becky and ride the Goldwing out from there. Now the ticket that I had purchased was no good since she was not going to be using the front half of it. I changed it and everything was set to go. The biggest worry Jill had now was the second day of our trip from Minneapolis to Denver. It was going to be a 655 mile day from Salem to Denver on the FJR.

The second week of May we made a little trip to Duluth to get Jill a little more prepared for the upcoming ride. That's right a trip to Aerostich was in order. We got her a Darien suit and some radios so we could talk on the FJR, a camelback so she could drink while riding and most importantly an Air Hawk seat cushion for the passenger seat on the FJR. Some Alpinestar boots were ordered and a couple weeks later, she was decked out in the height of LD fashion. I got a great deal from Dan Cohen on a J&M headset and now we were going to be able to talk to each other.

I ordered up a set of adapters for the radios from MR Communications and Mark Ries overnighted them to Jill's place in Ham Lake. They were supposed to be there on Friday and we were going to pull out for Salem on Saturday. Saturday morning and still no sign of them, a quick call to the post office and they let us know they should be there within the hour. An hour and a half later and still no sign of them, another call to the post office and they informed us that they had been delivered. They had been delivered to another address and someone else had signed for them. We went over to that house three blocks away and saw the package through the window on the kitchen counter. With the house locked and no one around we had no choice but to leave. That meant we weren't going to be talking to each other on the way to Denver. Fortunately, Jill had gotten me an XM radio as an early birthday gift so we would at least have tunes (I told you she was something special).

We headed out for Salem, SD about 2:30 on the first portion of the biggest ride we had taken together. We made it about 180 miles and the skies started to look quite threatening and the wind was starting to pick up rapidly. We got gas and closed up the vents on our Darien suits. The rain started and we continued on, but it only rained for about 5 miles, but the wind continued to blow from the south with great gusto. The rest of the trip was uneventful with one more stop for a candy bar and bathroom break. We spent the night with Mark & Dee Dickinson (Mark was Jill's youth pastor when she was in high school). After church and a great steak dinner we headed for Denver. The wind had not stopped and was blowing even stronger from the south as we head west on I-90.

We headed south off of the interstate and I saw a sign for Winner, SD 30 miles ahead. I had about 45 miles to go on gas so this would not be a problem. As we get closer, I looked on the GPS and saw that Winner was 8 miles east of where we needed to turn to the west. Oh well, there were a couple of other towns 10 and 22 miles down the road, we could get gas there. At the first town, which had absolutely no services I started to wonder if I had made a really bad decision. By the time we hit the second little town and there was no gas in sight I knew I had goofed up. I knew I didn't have the range to make it the next 18 miles and sure enough about 8 miles down the road I felt the first sputter. We coasted into a driveway off the road and I was able to buy a gallon of gas that someone had in a jug on the back of their four-wheeler. For \$10, it sure beat walking the next ten miles. Jill was fairly unconcerned and said she was checking out the ditches for a place to sleep while I went looking for gas. The rest of the trip was fairly uneventful as we dodged the thunderstorms on the way into Denver.

Sunday night was spent in Denver with Bill & Becky Gillespie and then on Monday morning we headed down to Colorado Springs to start the house search. Monday and Tuesday evening we stayed with Norm & Linda Babcock who did their best to spoil us. It was tough looking at houses in our price range after staying at their place.

Wednesday night we had dinner back at Bill & Becky's and took

the first ride on the Goldwing. We hooked up the intercom system and with the first words I spoke to Jill I got an ear full of her giggle. She thought it hilarious to hear me in her head. I love that laugh and would have plenty of opportunities to hear it over the next several days. Thursday morning and we were ready to head out for Salt Lake. Andy Mills, a friend from Minnesota was also riding out with us on his FZ1 and we met up with Bob Norton on the way out of Denver.

We stopped for breakfast in Silverthorne and Brian Boberick joined up with us there. We made it out to Salt Lake checked into our hotel and made it over to Steve's for the BBQ. It was a chance to catch up with some old friends and meet some new people. A lot of comments were made on my choice of bike for this ride, but once they saw my passenger they all understood. As Brian commented later, that's the best thing I've seen come out of an aerostich in a long time. Andy was introduced to Steve by Bill who was kind enough to let Steve know that Andy had intentions of coming out and kicking some old guys asses. I know Andy was very appreciative of that introduction.

Friday was spent getting the last minute preparations made. Some Velcro from Radio Shack to attach the XM radio to the Goldwing, some safety flares from Checker and highlighters and extra Polaroid film from Wal-Mart. We did the odometer check and then had a chance to ride a couple of other bikes. Bill Newton very generously offered a ride on his 1800 Goldwing, which felt positively sporty compared to the 1500. A quick spin on the '04 FJR and a chance to test out the ABS courtesy of Walt who was testing one for Motorcycle Consumer News. Then a second odometer check on the ST1300 for Bill Gillespie. The riders meeting and then off to dinner with Dick and Irene Fish, Alan Barbic, Dave Biasoti, Andy Mills, Bill Gillespie, and Brian Boberick.

Morning came quickly and I felt well rested after about 6 hours of sleep, but Jill figured she had only slept about an hour or so. I figured she would be sleeping a bit on the back of the Goldwing during the rally. The 6 am riders meeting and the packets were handed out. We went back to the room and began to plan out

our route. We figured out the bonuses that we would try to catch up until the second checkpoint and then we could reevaluate the ride at that point depending on how we felt.

The first bonus was at the marina near Saltair where we had to write down the speed limit sign at the entrance to the marina parking lot. We were in and out without stopping as Jill could write down all the info as we made the U-turn. Next, it was up to Hill AFB in Ogden where we got a picture of the F-86 Sabre. Heading back through Salt Lake we were passed by someone on a BMW K1200LT and following him through a turn, a bit of a bump and the floorboards were scraping, that was the only time that I touched those down in the rally. I was getting a little more used to the large bike, which just didn't handle like an R1, imagine that.

The next bonus was south of Salt Lake where we had to find the first name of some guy off of a historical marker; Jedediah was the answer we were looking for. Jill wrote it down and off for the next bonus, but first we picked up a golf scorecard from the nearby golf course.

The next bonus had us pick up a signed business card from a Honda dealership off of Hwy 40. They had cards waiting for us and also a table of fruit and donuts, but we didn't have time to waste and we were off to the next bonus. This time we had to find out how many acres were listed on a marker by a dam. Then it was off to the GPS coordinates given which were near the Wyoming sign as we left Utah. We got all of these and pulled into the first checkpoint, an Arby's in Evanston, WY about 15 minutes after it opened. Steve checked us in and asked Jill if she was okay, she still had a huge smile on her face indicating that she was having fun. So far things were looking good.

The next checkpoint was located in Salina, but we had a lot of things to do before that opened up at five o'clock. We headed south and started to pick up more bonus points. We found the sign letting us know who cleaned the section of highway nearest milepost 12 in Wyoming and the name of the ranch near milepost 26 in Utah along Hwy 191. This was a fun road and took us up over 10,000 feet of elevation with the temp dropping to near 50

degrees. Jill was a little cool, but I warned her that she would be wishing for those temps in a few short hours. I let her know that we had covered 200 miles and we were in great shape to do well on the ride. An hour and a half later, I let her know that we had now covered 300 miles and she was surprised thinking that it was only a couple minutes ago that I had told her it was 200 miles. Apparently, she was doing pretty well back there and the miles were racking up very easily.

The next bonus involved locating a milepost near a set of GPS coordinates. We found the location and took a picture of the underground cable post located at that point. It didn't look like a milepost, but it was exactly where the coordinates said it should be. Then on to Verndale to get a picture of a Vietnam memorial. We were meeting a lot of bikes coming the other way and I wondered if we had made the right choice for our route. We got the picture and headed back toward the second checkpoint. A couple more bonus' were picked up on the way, one involved counting the number of monuments near Helper, UT and another one getting the mileage to Gunnison off of a road sign. We got to the checkpoint couple minutes after it opened and it was time to stop for a bite to eat and figure out our plan for the second half of the rally. We ordered up some Burger King and pulled out the maps. The national parks bonus was looking like a good option and a large GPS bonus that looked to be out on a gravel road was going to have to fit in somewhere. Then Bill, Andy, Bob, and Brian mentioned that they were thinking about heading to Vegas. I asked Jill if she was up for a long night of pushing it to get a bunch more points. Okay, if you want, I'm up for it, you're the one who has to drive she said.

We pulled out of the gas station while the others were just starting to get on their gear. As we headed for the large GPS bonus we contemplated another bonus that was an extra 6 miles in and out to count the number of bolts holding a sign on the corner of Hwy 24 and 25. We made good time and made a few calls on the CB, but with no answer thought the rest of them had gotten ahead of us. A few minutes later, I heard Brian over the CB and he said they had our taillights in view; we were still ahead of them. Hwy 22 turned out to be a very fun road and the

pavement didn't end as we had anticipated from the map. We got a picture of the abandoned grainery and we were off to Bryce Canyon national park. A picture of the entrance sign and then it was off to Cedar Breaks for another picture.

As we came to where we were to head west the road was blocked off for a hot air balloon festival. We made a bit of a circular route around town and we were off to Cedar Breaks for the second picture. The three parks were worth 2525 points, but only if you had all three of the required pictures, miss one and it was all in vain. We pulled into the third checkpoint and Dave McQueeney checked us in. We filled up on gas and got ready to head for Vegas. A quick stop at the next exit to get a picture of a lighthouse for a few points and then it was off to Vegas. A non-eventful trip down I-15 to exit 42 and I sat with the bikes while everyone ran into to get the required keno ticket.

I saw the thermometer hit 99 through the canyon in Arizona, which was the hottest temp during the ride, really not too bad considering the places we had been so far. Another stop for gas and we were on the return trip, about this time the mic was intermittently cutting out on Jill's headset. She was able to make it work by holding the cord in a certain spot for a while, but it continued to get worse. We made a quick stop at the port of entry to get a picture and then to Zion national park. Bill took the lead and we rode to the entrance of Zion National Park and got our picture.

The next bonus took us to an old abandoned iron plant. Steve warned us that there may be snakes, but we didn't see a single rattler. After getting the picture, we headed back up the interstate to Fillmore to get a picture of a historical house and that would conclude our bonus stops. Now all we had to do was make it back before the clock ran out at 9:00. We had to stop one more time for gas and we used this as an opportunity to sort out our paperwork, pictures and receipts. Jill wrote down all the information on the clean set of paperwork, as the one that she had been holding was looking pretty ratty by now. We picked up the required six-pack (Coke) and a bag of ice to keep it cold along with the receipt to show that it had been purchased after 7:00. Now all we had to do was cover the last 60 miles in less

than one hour. With the speed limit of 75 on the interstate this would be a piece of cake. We pulled in to the parking lot of the hotel with 13 minutes to spare, wrote down the ending mileage and parked the bike. The folder was turned in and we were done. Now all we had to do was wait for the banquet at 1:00 to find out how we had done. We went back to the room and added up all the points that we had collected and came up with a total of 20,970. I was certain this was going to give us a good finish.

Andy and I got short naps while Jill spent most of an hour untangling her hair. We got up for the banquet and Steve started to draw numbers for door prizes and started the process of announcing the top 10 overall finishers and the top 5 in the couple's category. Andy had finished 7th and Bill was in 6th, but we still had more points than them so we were looking pretty good. As it came down to the last two couples, it was as I had anticipated, it would be between Jill and I and Archie and Irene. Steve announced that second place went to Archie and Irene which meant we had won! He announced our score, which was exactly what we had come up with, it was good enough for 4th overall and the best finish I've had yet on this rally. It didn't quite turn out to be the easy, let's just try and finish, ride that I had told Jill we could do, but she seemed to enjoy the experience, putting on 1556 miles in 26 hours. I know that I had more fun on this rally than any of the previous times. Many thanks again to Steve and Janiel for their generous gift. And a huge thank you to Bill and Becky for their continued generosity, I never would have imagined what I was in for when they adopted me in 2000, the first year I rode the 1088.

Jill wasn't completely sick of riding; in fact she wanted to go for another ride. Andy offered the FZ1 and we took that for a ride downtown to a park. We talked a bit about the ride and Jill had ideas for things that we could do to improve things for next time. Jill flew back to Minneapolis the next morning and I rode back to Denver with Bill, Brian and Bob by way of Paradox Hill to see the memorial for Jim Young. We made another stop in Glenwood Springs for dinner with George Barnes and then back into Denver. I went to the Rockies game on Tuesday night and then rode the FJR back to North Dakota on Wednesday feeling a bit alone on the bike by myself. I was missing my riding partner and

couldn't wait to get her back on the bike again.

Well, a couple weeks from now and I'm headed to the Black Hills for a week of horseback riding and camping and I hope that I can at least do half as well as Jill did playing my games. The wedding is still on for September 27th and you may see us on a rally or two in the future.

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