

## **Warchild's 2002 Ride: "Into the Desert Night"!**

I've entered a lot of Endurance events over the years, and as one of the "plank-owner" founding members of the Cognoscente Group, have put on a number of my own events. But in all that time and in all those miles, I don't seem to recall \*any\* that was as much pure, unadulterated fun for me than the 2002 Utah 1088.

Here is the story.

### **THE PLAN:**

My approach to the Utah 1088 was quite different than the average entrant because my eyesight no longer allows me to ride at rally speeds at night. I am permanently retired from riding in these events competitively. However, I can still move right along down the road just fine in daylight. But typically, I can travel no faster than at or below the posted speed limit at night.

So my strategy for the 2002 Utah 1088 was simply to earn the rights to be a legitimate Finisher.

To be officially considered a Finisher, you must ride the minimum Main Route mileage (1134 miles this year), and also make at least 2 of the 3 Mandatory Checkpoints. The Checkpoint windows were 2 hours in length. In the interest of safety, I needed to ride the vast majority of that 1134 miles during the day, so I could have plenty of "buffer" time at night to finish up the mileage at a much reduced pace.

### **SALT LAKE CITY:**

I arrived at Rally Headquarters in Salt Lake City around 2pm on Friday, June 28. As always, it was excellent to see the grizzled veterans from past events. Frank Taylor was the first to greet me, then the Rallybastard himself. The Baddest Dawg of them all, Gary Eagan, was there with his battle-scarred Duckatitti ST4. Lou Cypher was there, riding on a borrowed K1200RS. Jeff Earls, John O'Keefe, Eric Jewell, Devern Gerber, Joe Mandeville, Bill

Weyer, Paul Unmacht, and dozens of others. From the ST1100 list, Alan Barbic, John Tice, John Parker and a couple others as well. My personal hero, Grady Dunham, was there riding on a BONE STOCK Yamaha YZF-R1!!!!

Returning to the Old School methodology of Endurance Events, the crusty Rallybastard Steve Chalmers decided this year to hand out the Bonus Listings only 60 minutes prior to Rally Start time. As tradition dictates, there was a Main Route where the vast majority of bonii was located, and several Alternate Routes that one could take. If electing for one of the Alternate Routes, you had to declare your intentions to the Rallybastard prior to departure.

While everyone else scurried back to their motel rooms, cracked open laptops and Street Pilot software, and furiously started pounding their keyboards, I felt like the Old School I am as I casually broke out a yellow highlighter and marked the two daytime Mandatory Checkpoints on the map.

Rough business, this plotting of bonus point locations.

The first Checkpoint was at the classic Phillips 66 station at the junction of Utah HWY 132 and I-15, located at the little town of Nephi, between the hours of 9:30-11:30 AM. The second Mandatory Checkpoint was located at another gas station at the junction of HWYs 95 and 24, in the blistering hot town of Hanksville, Utah, between 4-6 PM. The third and final checkpoint was at a gas station in Cedar City, Utah, right along I-15, between 2-4AM.

I didn't even bother to scan the Bonus Listings for bonus locations along my route, cuz I had no intention of stopping for them. Again, my main task during the day was to accumulate mileage, and the wheels don't spin while you're dicking around collecting bonii. Still, I noticed among the first few listings a classic Utah 1088 bonus: obtain a casino token from any casino in Wendover, Nevada, and turn it in to the Checkpoint worker at Mandatory Checkpoint One.

I decided to go after this bonus point for two reasons: 1) it adds

a tasty 225 miles to the odometer right out of the gate, and 2) it's a Utah 1088 tradition with me. Whenever I have ridden the Utah 1088 in the past, I always get this Wendover casino chip bonus. It is the sole bonus point I obtained during the entire event.

## **THE START:**

Riders were allowed to depart at 7AM, and a few of the Big Dawgs blasted out of the gate right at 7:00:01 AM. Me, I casually strapped down the 1- gallon insulated water jug, packed chock full of ice, on the rear rack of the Blackbird, and left the Start Line around 7:20 AM. I set the two Radio Shack timers: Timer 1 was set to the overall 26-hour rally countdown (rally time was GPS time, but sadly, I had left my GPSIII+ at home); Timer 2 was set to the end of the Mandatory Checkpoint 1 closing time. I wrote down the starting odometer figure: 25361.

So there I was, blasting west towards Wendover, NV on I-80, traveling at a somewhat brisk pace, with the V1 only occasionally offering any indications of LEO presence. The sun was up and behind me, the morning desert air was crisp and fragrant with sagebrush. I cruise into the Peppermill Casino just about 8:30 AM, grabbed a \$1 token, and refueled. I took aboard an amazing 5.45 gallons of fuel for this brief one-way dash to Wendover, resulting in a rally-low mileage of 21.6 mpg.

Up onto the I-80 onramp I go, blasting back east.

Passing by the rest area near Aragonite, I noticed a brief flashing twinkle high up in the sky, well ahead of me. I strained to focus in on it. Holy crap, it's a Bear in the Air!!! The UHP had it's Cessna flying the I-80 corridor this morning, the tell-tale blue wing-tips clearing identifying it as a LEO aircraft. I responded with an appropriate rollback of the throttle.

Not many minutes later, it was time to get off the Interstate for good, so I deployed the Blackbird's air brakes and exited off HWY 36, heading south toward Toole. Now I was on two-lane back roads, not a whole lot of traffic to speak of, so I was able to

make some pretty fair time. I smoked past Bauer, Stockton and Vernon in short order. At Tintic, I headed east on HWY 6, up and over the hills around Elberta and Gosher, and hooked back up with I-15 south for a brief few miles until the Nephi exit and Mandatory Checkpoint One.

### **CHECKPOINT ONE:**

I rolled up to the Phillips 66 with about 20 minutes before the Checkpoint closed, a little closer than I would like to have been. The odo depicted 25685. Cool, here I was about 4 and a half hours into the event, and I already had 324 miles accumulated, over 1/4 of the total needed. I took aboard 7.063 gallons of fuel, and noticed my mpg figure had improved markedly since leaving the interstate, increasing to 29.1 mpg.

I checked in with the Rallybastard, who recorded my time and casino token bonus. I had the option of doing some push-ups (5 points a pushup, max of 25 pushups), but told Pushup Monitor Bill Weyer "No, thanks, I gotta hit the road". I explained to Bill my need to just rack up mileage, and he suggested to go south to hook up with I-70 east, and ride to Colorado and back before hitting Checkpoint 2. I could either take I-15 south to I-70 (saving time), or take HWY 28 south out of Nephi and hook up with I-70 at Salina. The latter would not be quite so fast, as there would be a number of small towns to go through, but the route had killer scenery. Since I was well, WELL ahead of the game mileage-wise, I decided to opt for the scenery routes for the remainder of the event.

With a full bag of fuel and fresh ice in the insulated water jug, I hopped on I-15 for the brief few miles before the HWY 28 exit. As I cruise on down the road and the HWY 28 exit appeared, I made a snap-decision to reverse my plan, and take the faster Interstate down to I-70.

Man, was *\*that\** ever an error in judgment!!!!

What I didn't know was that UDOT had decided to take I-15 down to one-lane (the gravel-strewn shoulder) for about the next

50 miles!!!! PHUCK ME TO TEARS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Slowly, with great agony and trauma, I inched down the sweltering Interstate behind a nasty-ass diesel smoke-spewing gravel truck. Every time he hit a bump, several pounds of pea-gravel would come bounding out of the rear of his truck, making my forward movement more challenging than it already was.

And this lasted almost an hour!

Mercifully, the exit for HWY 50 finally appeared, so I thankfully dashed off the simmering Interstate and headed southeast. This stretch of HWY 50 runs along the east side of the Fishlake National Forest, and it was simply a gorgeous ride all the way down to I-70. Big rolling vistas, mountain ranges on either side, it was really the first of many spectacular views I was about to enjoy for the next 8 hours.

I rolled into Salina and thought about stopping to replenish the water bottle, but I could tell it was still half full, and I still had a substantial amount of fuel. I wasn't inclined to stop in this nasty armpit of a town anyway. If the state of Utah ever needed a barium enema, Salina is definitely where they would insert the tube. So I just continued on until I reached the I-70 on-ramp. I-70 that runs east-to-west through the center of Utah is unlike most other Interstates. This entire run is chock full of beautiful scenery and gorgeous vista views. For 35 miles east of Salina, it meanders through the Fishlake National Forest and all the beautiful twists and turns. For the next 70 miles, it winds through some exceptional areas: Coal Cliffs, the Copper Globe, Sinbad Valley, the Mclean Reef, and the San Rafael Swell, just to name a few.

It was at a Rest Area near Black Box, just west of Green River, where I had the first miscue in the rally.

### **WATER BOTTLE HOSE:**

Shortly before Green River, I pulled over at a scenic vista viewpoint.

I-70 cuts across one of the emptiest and least developed regions of Utah: the San Rafael Swell - a wide plateau crossed by two entrenched river systems and surrounded by a ring of upturned strata. Arid, little vegetated yet often very scenic, with mesas, cliffs, buttes, springs and especially canyons; these are sometimes wide with stepped sides but often narrow and slot-like. The colors make the scene complete. Every imaginable hue of red, orange and pink is here on display.

After taking it all in, I walked back on the bike and starting the mount-up process. It's just about an ass-pain to mount up on the bike under rally conditions; you got to make sure all your rally doo-dads and trappings are placed just so. And if you get in a hurry or are beginning to fatigue, you can start to forget to arrange your items properly before getting underway. For example, you could forget to reconnect your water bottle drink tube to your tankbag.

The 1-gallon insulated water jug & drinking tube was the final farkel I did to the CBR1100XX prior to the Utah 1088, and the system really didn't get exercised thoroughly prior to being pressed into service. This personal hydration system is a common one used throughout the Endurance community. It basically consists of a 1 gallon insulated jug with wide-mouth opening, and drinking pout spout at the top of the jug. The wide-mouth opening facilitates quick ice re-fills, and the pour spout opening is a perfect soft press-fit for a Camelback or Platypus drinking tube. Or, in my case, appropriate sized clear vinyl tubing from Home Depot at .08 per foot.

One end of the tube goes through the pour spout and to the bottom of the jug, the other end is fitted with a "bite tube" and is retained up near the tankbag by a janitor's key-retractor lanyard. When I wanted a drink, I would just grab the bite tube, stick it in my mouth, bite the tube and gulp down as much water as I want, then just let the bite tube go when done. The retracting lanyard pulls the tube back down to its docking station on the tankbag.

But, if you dick-up and forget to re-attach the bite tube to the tankbag after mounting up, and simply leave the drinking tube

draped over the rear of the bike, well.... the air stream is going to have it's way with it. Indeed, shortly after leaving the Rest Area, I saw in the left rear view mirror the drinking tube hose flailing away in the air stream.

I quickly reached back to try to save the tube end.... too late!! The hose had smacked the tire more than once, and there was no trace of the bite tube left, nor the retracting lanyard. Bummer. This sucked out loud. Losing the ability to drink while underway in the desert is very, very bad. I started to bum heavily.

I was about to reach the town of Green River, and I decided to exit off and see if I could take 10 minutes to locate a bicycle shop, knowing they would have a bite tube. No such luck. I decided to cut my losses and head over to the Checkpoint 2 a little early and see about effecting repairs as I waited for the checkpoint to open. I wheeled the Blackbird around and point the nose towards the west, and exit 147, which was HWY 24 south towards Hanksville.

### **DESCENT INTO THE INFERNO:**

I was hoping for a little reprieve from the hot Interstate, but it wasn't any better out on 2-lane HWY 24. In fact, it quickly got worse. The road south seemed to descend into a Basin, and the further south I traveled, the hotter it got. It was well after 2 PM, and the sun was BROILING up high in the sky. I stopped for another drink and viewed the surrounding stark beauty. Gawd, I love this environment! There is no place on earth like the Desert West!!

I looked down and noted the Radio Shack digital thermometer read 103 degrees. I picked up the pace and close the distance to Hanksville (and shade) in minimal time. Bill Gillespie was there to record the time and odometers of riders. As I was there a little early, I slowly gave the bike a good look-over, noting no problems. I turned to the water bottle problem and determined that there really wasn't a whole lot to be done. And, thankfully, I could still pull water up out of the jug and drink, it's just that

when finished, I would have to "blow" into the tube to force the water back into the jug, to prevent water from leaking out all over the place. Since I had no retractor lanyard anymore, I simply coiled the tube around my lap and let it sit there. Not a very elegant solution, but it worked. The main thing is that I could drink while underway again.

Right at 4PM, Bill Gillespie signed off my Checkpoint sheet, and I was free to leave. By this time, a number of riders were at the checkpoint, all feverishly studying the bonus listings and the map. The Main Route had riders continuing to go down scenic HWY 95 towards Fry Canyon, then pick up HWYs 261 and 216 as it descends into Arizona. From there you had a wild ride through the Apache and Navajo Reservations, then you would eventually climb back north and re-enter Utah and head for Checkpoint 3 at Cedar City.

The problem with this route (for me) is that I would still be in extremely thick deer country well after the sun went down. Too, there is a lot of excessive DUI problems along the Arizona route, and this being Saturday night didn't help the matter any. Still, at this point, it was about 8 1/2 hours into the rally, I had about 600 miles accumulated, so I was sitting pretty. No need to slay any dragons that might lurk in Arizona; I was going to plan a route that was nothing but killer scenery. And, again, the goal was to be out of the mountains by nightfall, and out into the vast open desert, where I could stand a chance against night critters. In the mountains, the critters have all the ambush advantages. But in the open desert, the critter would have to have exceptional camouflage to escape detection from my HID/PIAA flamethrowers.

### **HWY 12 - BRYCE CANYON:**

As it turned out, the Rallybastard already had a route laid out for me. The incredibly beautiful HWY 12 was the other major-league scenic route the Rallybastard had strewn a lot of bonus locations upon. While I never stopped for any, I saw many fellow rally players scribbling answers on their tankbags before scurrying off for the next bonus location. I both passed and got passed up by



the same riders all along this route.

HWY 12 is among the most awesome motorcycle roads on earth as it meanders through the Dixie National Forest on it's way to Bryce Canyon, then connects up with equally awesome HWY 14. It's a green-dot scenic route on your map all the way. While it is only about 225 miles, this route cuts through some of the most scenic spots in all of Utah (and that's saying something! ). Many a time I stopped just to kick back and check out the views and appreciate life for what it is. I must have stopped a dozen times and even when riding, I just putted along below the posted speed limit, taking in the sights. Warchild definitely set no land speed records here.....

I saw lots of deer around the Escalante State Park and Red Canyon. Pretty sure this route would be quite the adventure at night. Hooking up with HWY 14 at Long Valley Junction, I must have spent 2 hours traveling the remaining 40 miles to Cedar City. HWY 14 defies meaningful description. You just have to ride it to experience it. But let me try to describe riding through the Cedar Breaks: close your eyes for a minute and think back to your childhood and the first time you opened a real cedar chest. Remember being delighted as you took in the rich, fragrant aroma? That's what the air within the Cedar Breaks smells like. Now imagine riding your motorcycle in this wonderful aroma.... ..... for miles and miles and miles!!

I spent a long, loooooong time traversing the 225 miles between Hanksville and Cedar City, and without question, the time spent on this leg was the highlight of the Rally. Every turn, every corner provided the rider with a gorgeous new vista or scenic view. I can not adequately describe how beautiful this part of the state is; one truly must ride it to fully appreciate it.

### **STEAK & RIBS:**

As I neared Cedar City the sun was finally starting to set. This was perfect. I could refuel and strike out into the open desert all the way back to Salt Lake. But right before I reach Cedar City, the came across a quite nice little restaurant that features Steak

and Ribs. WHOA!!! Out of nowhere, massive hunger pangs struck me, and against every bit of Long Distance training, I decided to stop and have a full-blown, sit-down dinner in the middle of the rally!! Such is the luxury of not having to be constantly hunting bonii. So stop I did. Filet Mignon, Honey BBQ Baby Back Ribs, baked potato, corn on the cob, garlic bread, and a mondo-slice of chocolate cream pie for desert! WOO-HOO!!!!

### **INTO THE NIGHT:**

By now it was closing in towards 9 PM. It was a mere 12 hours before the rally ended, and I was close to the 800 mile mark. I was on top of the world.... with only 400 miles to go and 12 hours to do it, I was on more than Easy Street; I was on Cool Breeze Boulevard. I still had a hefty amount of fuel, so I didn't bother refueling at Cedar City, I simply struck out north onto desolate, lonely HWY 130. Soon the night air was pitch black except for hundreds of feet in front of the mighty Blackbird, where it was still broad daylight. Several million candlepower from the unshielded Osram HID, coupled with the long-range intensity of the PIAA 910s, together turned the dark desert night into bright daylight. The PIAAs ensured I could see well down the road; the HID ensured I could see everything deep along the sides of the roads. Traveling the 50 miles north up to Minersville, I saw an awful lot of furry things; mice, coyotes, jackrabbits, possums, and antelope. Except for the mice, none came anywhere near the bike. The mice, however, continue to be turned into tiny meat waffles as the Dunlops left their distinctive tread patterns on their tiny little spines. Take that, ya little varmits!

I started getting a little tired by the time I reached Minersville, and I noticed I had better get gas soon. Didn't see a gas station open, so I cruise back to the interstate on HWY 21 to find fuel. Located a station at Beaver Valley, refueled, and took stock of the situation as I popped open an ice-cold Mountain Dew. The odometer said 26212, which means I had accumulated 851 miles. Still needed another 350-ish miles. I could just crawl up the interstate, but it was so much more tranquil back out in the empty desert, so I decided to backtrack on HWY 21 to

Minersville, then head north into the Utah desert outback on HWY 257. Eventually, I would get back to the Interstate near Nephi. Then a slow cruise into Salt Lake.

That was the plan, anyway.

I set the throttle lock at a sedate 65 mph, and settled in to study the bright road way for critters for the next several hundred miles.

### **INKY BLACKNESS:**

It was well after midnight as I cruised north on HWY 21. The stars were out in earnest, and the Milky Way twinkled merrily above me. Sadly, I saw very little of the galactic show as I was intently concentrating on the road before me. While deer are always a concern, an even bigger problem in this particular area was antelope. They were everywhere along the sides of the roads, but few ventured onto the asphalt. Still, smashing into one of these critters would just put a damper on the whole rally. At Milford, I briefly toyed with the idea of staying on HWY 21 as it dashed west towards Nevada and the Great Basin National Park. Maybe accumulate 1500+ miles for the event. Nah.... I pushed the right handgrip down towards the asphalt, heading the Blackbird north on desolate HWY 257.

If there was ever a big stretch of nothing, it would be the 70 miles of HWY 257 as it burns north from Milford to Deseret. There are only two little farming communities along the way, Black Rock, and Clear Lake. Otherwise..... long stretches of empty nothingness. As I droned on into the inky blackness, I imagined what the surrounding area looked like in the day. The San Francisco Mountains, along with the Beaver and Cricket mountain Ranges, lined the west side of HWY 257. Opposite the Cricket mountains, on the east side of the highway, was an area known as the Black Rock Desert (same name, but obviously not the same as the desert near the Mecca of Endurance Riding, Gerlach, Nevada).

As I neared Deseret, I again toyed with the idea of dashing west

on HWY 50 to Ely, then arching north towards Wendover and return to Salt lake. Nah.... I was getting kinda tired, and I knew the smart money says to stick with the Original Plan, ride the miles, then head back for the barn and watch all the other festivities as riders returned. I turned east on HWY 6 towards Delta and Lynndyl.

It was just before Jericho Junction that I had my biggest scare of the night.

### **WAKE UP!**

I was probably about a half mile from the junction when I got one brief, short burst of Ka signal from the Valentine One, then silence. The Valentine almost never offers false positives in the Ka range, and there was nothing but blackness all around, and no traffic whatsoever. Hmmmmmm..... wonder WTF that was all about? Fortunately, out of pure instinctive habit whenever I hear a Ka brap, I had rolled off the throttle as I assessed the situation. About 10 seconds later, the Valentine goes from dead silence to a raging screaming fully-locked hit on Ka band!

BRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Damn.... a Sheriff's white 4x4 with hand-held Instant-On radar! Fortunately for me, I was well within the confines of the prevailing speed limit, so I waved to the nice Sheriff as I passed him by. I wonder why he didn't wave back....

### **CIVILIZATION:**

I decided after my little LEO encounter to just head back to the barn via the Interstate, and not mess around in the desert anymore. I hooked up with HWY 132 at Jericho Junction and blasted east, dusting off the 23 miles in short order. Now I came to the familiar Phillips 66 station at Nephi, scene of Checkpoint One many hours ago. The station was now dark and empty in the wee early morning hours. I slowly took the on-ramp to I-15 north, brought the bike up to just under 70 mph, and locked the throttle.

I hummed north at a sedate pace, trying to perform TDS equations in my head to see if The Plan was working or not. This was the more agonizing part of the rally. Numb from riding 1000 miles in the past 16.5 hours, I had a hard time making any useful calculations. The monotony of droning on I-15 wasn't helping the matter. Fatigue was starting to make itself known. Just past Mona Reservoir, I-15 climbs up a small range, and at the summit I saw the twinkling lights of a large city, and there was a large lake to the left of it! ALRIGHT!!! Back to Salt Lake City, and only a short time before I could lay my head on a soft warm pillow....

NOT!

It wasn't SLC, it was only the city of Provo, and it was Utah Lake I saw, not Salt Lake. Daaaymn!

Salt Lake City was still a good 50 miles to the north, so I grinded on, knowing that it wouldn't be \*that\* much longer before I was done. The mental discipline acquired through years of Endurance Riding was at work here, keeping me upright and moving forward even when I really wanted to stop and take a combat nap. On and on I blasted into the night, mindful of the speed limit since a lot of LEOs were out looking for Saturday night drunks. Lots of Valentine hits, too. Finally, mercifully, I spied the I-80 exit towards SLC International Airport, and Rally Headquarters at the Holiday Inn. I laid the Blackbird over heavily as I took the cloverleaf faster than necessary. At the end of the cloverleaf, I stood the bike up and tried to do one last TDS equation, since I was minutes from the End Line. Unfortunately, a serious case of mind-mush wouldn't allow me to do math and ride at the same time anymore, so I just waited until I pulled into the Holiday Inn parking lot. Pulling out a small calculator so I wouldn't have to think, I punched in the numbers.

I was aghast to determine that I was sitting at about 1130 miles.... too little!

While on paper I only had to cover 1134 miles, my odometer check the previous day suggested that my odometer was a bit optimistic. The Rallybastard Chalmers suggested I had better run

up about 1200 miles in this event (indicated), just to be absolutely sure I had garnered enough mileage to be a finisher. That would just be a massive bumner to have ridden all this event but come up a dozen miles short of the minimum requirement. It was not quite 3AM, I was bone tired. It was complete dead silent in the Rally area parking lot. None of the other 60 riders had returned yet.

I can't tell you how much mental discipline it took to wheel that Blackbird around, and head back out on the road, feeling like dead meat on a stick.....

OK, I just needed a cool 70 miles to wrap things up, and I knew that Grantsville was a rough 35 miles away, so I took off towards the west, yawning mightily and wishing for a LEO-free zone. I hummed the mighty Blackbird down the Interstate at an assertive pace. Exit 88 soon arrive, and I got off the Interstate and dashed the remaining 10 miles to Grantsville. I pulled up to the city limits and studied the odometer. 34.7 miles since leaving the Holiday Inn parking lot. Returning the exact same way would net about 70 miles, enough to push me over the 1200-mile mark.

I wheeled the bike around for the last time, and headed north back to the interstate. Upon reaching the interstate, I knew I was really quite tired. I stopped the bike, got off and did 25 push-ups, 25 deep knee bends, and 50 jumping-jacks. I got back on the bike, kicked in some of that Mental Discipline stuff, and ran the 25 miles back to Rally Headquarters.

It was 3:55 AM when I pulled back into the parking lot for the last time.

I wrote down the odometer mileage, which indicated I had run 1204 miles in the past 21 hours. Not terribly impressive, but enough to achieve the goal.

I went to my room and methodically finished all my documentation, fuel logs, receipts, etc. Rally End time is 9AM, so I set my alarm for 7:30 AM, and fell onto the bed still wearing all my riding gear.... boots, too. The alarm went off promptly at

7:30, and I bounded out of bed like a new man, refreshed and invigorated after an uninterrupted 3 hours of blissful sleep. I slammed down a Mountain Dew and went out to see how the others were doing.

Riders were returning in 2's and 3's; many were back by 8AM. The Big Dawgs, however, were still out there and at it. I watch Jeff Earls pull in and it was immediately apparent he had gone for one of the alternate routes.... he looked like hammered horse-cock. But he sported a huge grin, so he undoubtedly thought he did well. Alan Barbic pulled up in his titanium ST1100, looking every bit as wore out as Jeff Earls, but he wasn't sporting a big grin. As it turned out, Jeff did have a helleva ride and a top 10 finish. Alan misinterpreted some bonus point instructions, and despite an enormous ride, finished up one place behind me! The ubiquitous Dick Fish finish in 2nd place, AGAIN, for the third year in a row. Dick vows to shake the Hoovie Curse next year, and he is certainly capable of doing so. The amazing Gary Eagan left everyone in the dust by turning in an \*enormous\* performance on his Ducati ST4. While most of the Top 10 finishers had point values in the 15,000 and 16,000 range, Eagan decimated the competition with a staggering 1st Place 20,000+ point total!!

With my whopping 140 point casino chip bonus, I didn't even bother checking the Final Standings. As it turned out, I finished in 47th Place, but I had achieved my goal to be a Finisher, and that was the only thing that mattered. Can't wait till next year!!!

- Warchild
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**Sigma BC1200 Stats:** ----- Total Distance: 1204 miles Total Underway Time: 18 hrs, 54 min Max speed: \*privileged\* Average rolling speed: 63.71 mph