

MD20-20 Rally Report

Bonnie Lee Hauck
2003 H-D Heritage Softail Classic

Verne Hauck
2001 H-D Road Glide

Verne and I decided Friday morning that we would plan our rally route to avoid the rain that was forecasted for the east over the Memorial Day weekend. As Verne set up the laptop following the riders meeting I looked over the bonus locations, ignoring anything that was east of York, PA. My eyes stopped at #435 Russellville, AR, 1,785 points. After entering the location in the mapping program Verne informed me Russellville was 1,125 miles away with a driving time of 18 hours. OK, $18 + 18 = 36$ leaving 12 hours; doable, my mind told me. Back tracking from Russellville I chose Memphis, TN for a stop on our way to AR. I also selected Pleasant Hill, KY; Sheffield, PA; Shanksville, PA and Annville, PA as other bonus stops, time permitting. By 1:30 Verne had waypoints for these six stops in his GPS and by 1:50 we were on our way Seeking Higher Ground.

As we headed out of town towards Maryland I began to compare the distance and time to Russellville with our trips to the IBA party in Palm Coast. Our destination for this trip is St. Augustine, FL, which is 860 miles from our home in Millersville, PA, requiring a *total* time of 16 ½ hours. Now we were heading to a destination that was 265 miles further requiring 18 hours of just driving time. Not only is Russellville further than St. Augustine but we were also going to have to turn right around and head back to PA after only a *short* stop. I was beginning to think I had not been in my right mind when I thought Russellville was doable.

At my request we stopped at 3:30 Saturday morning for our one-hour rest bonus that was spent sitting on the floor of a convenient store. We arrived at the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at about 9:15 Saturday morning to take St. Jude's photo. We were riders two and three to stop for this bonus. Charging on we arrived at the MTF Poker Run from Hell BBQ in Russellville at about 12:30 or was it 1:30. Darn if I can remember. After making a poor attempt at the driving test set up by Alan Leduc we spent about 30 minutes talking with him, Jason Jonas and a few other people while eating a couple pieces of delicious ribs and drinking warm iced tea before heading back to PA.

Again, at my request, we stopped early Saturday evening, 20 miles east of Memphis, to spend our two-hour rest bonus *in a bed*. It was wonderful to be able to wash my face and brush my teeth but when we left at 10:30 I was feeling a bit defeated. I was almost sure that arriving at the finish line by 2:00 PM Sunday was all but impossible. (Yes, 2:00.)

As the TN miles rolled by I kept re-figuring what could be the latest time we could drive pass Bristol and still arrive in York prior to two o'clock. Even though I was trying my best to keep each gas stop as short as possible, it was almost seven o'clock Sunday morning when we reached Bristol's city limits. The minutes were ticking away much too fast and the miles rolling by much too slow. Somewhere along I-40 I came up with new lyrics to the old tune "99 bottles on the wall". Two hundred twenty-four miles on the post; 224 miles on the post; take 1 down, roll it all around; 223 miles on the post!

When we drove away from our final gas stop, without a restroom stop, we had a good 125 miles to York. The time was 12:05 PM, which roughly calculated to 65 miles per hour for the next 115 minutes. Defeat was looming.

As we approached Chambersburg, PA, Verne made the critical decision to exit I-81 at route 30 and drive through Gettysburg. He reasoned this would give us a fighting

chance, no matter how slim, to arrive at the Holliday Inn before two o'clock. The excitement was mounting. The alternate route, to stay on I-81 to Harrisburg, exiting to I-83, would result in a guaranteed loss even though we could maintain a higher rate of speed. However, in retrospect, taking I-70 in Hagerstown, MD, to US-15 in Fredrick, MD, may have been the best route.

Traffic on route 30 was heavy but it kept moving at a reasonable pace. As we charged through Gettysburg I kept thinking, "It isn't over until the fat lady sings." In this case it isn't over until the rally bubba shouts, "Time barred". Even though we knew we had lost our battle against the clock we continued to push on relentlessly.

Much to my surprise Dale was sitting under the canopy at the finish line when we arrived at the Holiday Inn. So much for having to track down a rally bubba to let it be known that we had safely returned. Instead, Dale warmly greeted us as he notated the time, 2:21 PM, and recorded our odometer readings. Of course, what Dale knew that we did not know was, we had finished without being time barred!

All I could do was stare at Verne when he told me we had finished within the penalty period. WOW! Obviously I had not correctly heard Rick when he said the time period the finish line would be open nor had I taken the time to read this bit of info in the rally book. Although we lost 2,820 points for arriving late, at least we had a score.