

Ride report for 4-17-2013 – Central California ~Lynn Dimick BMR #117

Before every rally I try to set some goals. They are usually the same: Have fun, be safe, see new places, and finish in the top 1/3. These goals require good planning, good scouting, acceptable weather, and some efficient riding.

Once I achieved FINISHER status the BMR hook had been set pretty well. I decided I wanted to achieve at least BRONZE status. Since I was sitting at 172 points I needed to find a way to capture 38-44 points. The reason the goal was flexible was that I have a couple of bonuses that will not require any riding, MS001 and MS004. And I had HD020 about ten miles from my home. This stop is sort of a pain because it is right on Pacific Coast Highway and there is no parking in on PCH at that area. (more on this later)

One of the things that made this particular ride such a challenge was that I had already ‘cherry picked’ a series of prime boni because of their close proximity to each other when my original goal was to just finish. With TP bonuses being such a prime target I was more focused on gathering them than I was HD or FS. It has been my experience that the FS boni are very close to the route of visiting the TP boni. However, the TP boni are not well defined, even if you know the city name since you don't have exact GPS coordinates for the signs. So my route looked like this:



I asked a couple of riders how they were able to find so many TP boni and I got some good advice from Marc Beaulac. He said that he rides on small arteries and any small town within three miles of his path gets a visit to see if it qualifies. I found that you also have to poach as many TP from others riding in the same area.

This was to be a 791 mile, 15 hour ride. My wife wakes up at 5 most mornings. She is a school teacher and she likes to swim in the morning before heading off to work. So my goal was to arise with her, and hit the road early.

At 4:00 AM I was awoken by a call from Mother Nature. As I lay in bed thinking about trying to squeeze one more hour of sleep I decided that I would be better off leaving now and taking advantage of the pre-ride adrenaline. Since I had been out in part of this area the week before I anticipated riding in temperatures in the 80s. At 4:45, when I threw a leg over the saddle, the temperature was a balmy 57.

Since my first planned stop was 139 miles away I had plenty of distance to cover. I stopped at my local gas station, filled up my main tank and my auxiliary tank, and set out, quite comfortable in my LDCcomfort shorts and shirt and my Motoport gear. My 2 hour route had me going up the 405, over the Grapevine, and into the San Joaquin valley. The 405 is actually a good route to take because it is carpool/motorcycle lane almost the entire way to Santa Clarita. So I knew I could make good time.

Once I got close to Santa Clarita I began to remember how cold it is crossing the Grapevine. I had made that same crossing, at about the same time of day, last November while heading to the start of the Discover Kern County rally. Back then it was 32 with snow on both sides of the freeway. I made a mental agreement with myself that if the temperature dropped below 48 I would pull over and add a couple of layers. It hit 47 before I got to Castaic. So I pulled over and added my rain layers to cut down on the wind. It ultimately dropped to 40.

When I finally arrived at my first 'stop', Old River, CA I followed the GPS. However I soon found that I had gone west right through 'town' without seeing a sign. I knew there was a sign as this was a poached TP bonus. So I simply turned around and headed east – right into a rising sun. I kept an eye on my left mirror and just as I got through town again, I saw the missing sign. So I quickly turned around and snapped the picture. 3 down and ~42 to go!

This entire valley is dotted with small towns. The roads are EXTREMELY straight, and they do not require the same level of attentiveness as other roads, so I could do more looking around. I had kept Marc's advice in my mind and not four miles later I snapped another TP bonus, Panama, CA. This was not one that I was aware of so it was like found money. 6 down and 39 to go.

Heading north on 99, I joined the mix of commuters, semi trucks, and farm trucks aimed towards Fresno. I grabbed a quick HD bonus in Visalia and continued north towards Reedley. The entire length of this stretch of two lane highway was flanked by blooming orange groves on both sides of the road. They were very fragrant. I could start to smell the blossoms and appreciate the way that the pollen makes orange blossom honey taste a bit sharper than clover honey.

About halfway up this leg I saw a sign for a small town, Yettem, 2 miles east of my path. Remembering Marc's advice I made a quick right hoping to find another hitherto unknown TP bonus. No such luck. What I did find was a couple of small schools, including the Yettem High School that consisted of just three portable or temporary classrooms. So I turned around to resume my ride to Reedley. All the way contemplating how different my life might have been, and certainly my education would be different if I had attended such a small school.

After snagging the Orange Cove and Reedley FS bonuses (12 down 33 to go) I headed for Minkler. When I found the Minkler sign (15 down, 30 to go) after a ride of almost 3 hours so far, I found that I was traveling through a town that I had gone through some 31 years ago. After my wife and I were first married her dad invited me on a fishing trip and we went through Minkler on our way to Kings River. My father-in-law passed

away three years ago, and he was the person who got me interested in riding. Even co-signing for an RD400D before I married his daughter. What a great time I had riding these roads and thinking about him.

Heading north from Minkler I aimed my bike towards Academy. I was getting nervous because the road to Academy starts off with a 4 lane highway. No way could a TP bonus be off this road. By the time I had gone about 8 miles the road had narrowed down as expected. I finally saw the green TP sign and got the picture. (18 down, 27 to go)

Here is where my inexperience with a GPS created some excitement. I have 3 GPS, the stock one on my Goldwing, a Zumo 550, and a Nuvi 765. I was using the 765 as my primary navigating device because the 550 had a bad audio channel and the 765 has live traffic updates, Academy was the end of a spur on my route. In other words it was time to turn around. Well the GPS had picked a spot two miles BEFORE I found the TP sign as my stopping point. So when I kept riding it assumed I was looking for a way to turn around and it calculated one for me. So when I finally found the TP sign it still had me headed northeast through town. So instead of looking at my printed map I blindly followed the GPS.

About 40 miles later I started to get a déjà vu feeling. I knew I had seen some of these roads before but I thought it was from a previous ride. It turns out that the GPS had taken me on a 20 mile ride through some amazing country side instead of telling me to do a U turn. So by this time my time line was shot as were my plans for gas stops. So In true rally fashion I adjusted, and rode on. (21 down 24 to go)

Back in Minkler I headed east on 180 and hit my first semi-twisty roads. I quickly grabbed Miramonte, Pinehurst and Badger for 6 easy points within 12 miles. (28 down, 17 to go) and it was now about noon. It turns out that Badger was really worth nothing to me as it was a duplicate.

However the GPS gremlins were not done with me yet. Actually this one I am blaming on Streets and Trips 2013.

My next stop was to be a TP called Lemon Cove. This small town is located close to the end of the highway I was riding on. But on one magnification S&T shows it near Kaweah Lake (see below)



While on a lower magnification it shows it in its correct position



Well, knowing that the location of the TP sign was vague at best I rode all the way to the east end of the lake before I figured there was a problem. In my mind the Panama stop had been a freebie to make up for this one and so I punted it and continued on my ride route. I quickly found the TP sign but I lost another 20 minutes. To add insult to injury the TP190 was a duplicate score. So no points but some fast riding.

I stopped in Porterville for gas. I continued south on 65.

I have no idea how the next incident happened. I blame the GPS.

Two weeks before I had taken 155 from Porterville and grabbed a large cluster of points around Lake Isabella. Between the delays of cell phone coverage delaying my photo submissions and the close proximity of some of the points there was a discussion with the RM as to whether or not I was sandbagging. I had claimed ~21 points in less than 2 hours. I mention this just to illustrate that this had been a prime cluster of boni.

I was not looking forward to this route because the GPS displays an ETA but it uses the known speed limit for its calculation. On 155 the speed limit is 60 but I defy anyone whose last name is not Rossi to average 60 MPH on that road. 35-45 is more realistic.

Somehow I missed the turn for 155 and the GPS dutifully recalculated my route to take me almost all of the way back to Bakersfield! This added another 40 miles to a rather long ride.

The 58 is a east-west freeway that runs from Bakersfield to Barstow and is a primary truck route. I had been on this route in November with the DKC rally and remembered the cold and the wind that was toppling semi-trucks. Add in trucks that are laboring up a steep incline and pulling out to pass evens slower trucks and cars that think 75 is too slow and I was not looking forward to this section. This is the freeway that parallels the railroad tracks that pass through Tehachapi. Here the grade is so steep that the railroads created a loop in the track where a long train actually passes over itself while traversing the mountain.

Once I left the 58 I was heading north on the 14. Man, if the 50 is deserted this section may be the second most desolate place in the USA. In this 41 mile stretch I saw exactly three cars going the same direction. Again, this was a memory laden section as I had been here before with my father in law 30 years earlier to go dirt riding at Red Rock.

Passing through Ridgecrest I gassed up and grabbed another FS bonus (17 to go). Heading south on 395 I came to the town of Johannesburg. Big problem! I was planning on this being a TP165 stop and the southbound sign said the population was 300! Now this has some far-reaching implications for me. Without these 3 critical

points I will have to add another 4 hour (roundtrip) ride to pick up the points needed for a Bronze finish. But I knew that I had not invented the TP165 bonus associated with Johannesburg. So I rode to the south end of town to check out the northbound sign. There it was! TP165. A quick one mile ride to Red Mountain and I had 6 more points (11 to go).

I grabbed two more FS stops and an FG and headed for my last stop, SA017 Mountain High. By this time it was getting dark. When I rolled into Wrightwood the temperature was down to 53 and I had shed the rain covers many hours earlier. I pushed on and grabbed the last planned stop. By the time I returned through Wrightwood, about 25 minutes later, the temperature had dropped to 40! It dropped 13 degrees in 20 minutes once the sun went down.

I arrived home at 8:28 PM. So I was on the road for just under 16 hours and had ridden 843 miles. It was a great ride. I saw all kinds of sites as I took the time to enjoy the scenery and I got to remember some great times with my father in law.

As they say here is the scoreboard:

I collected 43 points (net) and had 2 TPs (6 points) disallowed for duplicates.



The max speed was not deliberately reset. It would have been less than 85 and the gas cost is for a ¾ ton van.

Here is a revised map of my final route. As you can see there were a lot of points that I collected earlier before I decided to press on to Bronze. I do have a 2.5 day route planned that will go up to Lake Tahoe and back down the CA coast that could bring me Gold status next week. But we'll see.... (continued next page)



My BMR pictures of this ride can be viewed [here](http://bigmoneyrally.com/2013/?page_id=24103&groovyrider=218&groovystart=2013-04-17&groovystop=2013-04-18)
http://bigmoneyrally.com/2013/?page_id=24103&groovyrider=218&groovystart=2013-04-17&groovystop=2013-04-18