

If a rider found themselves late for the 8:00 p.m. Sunday check in on their return to Kennewick, the only options for them to become a finisher was to get at least one bonus north of the 60th parallel, or get the combination bonus of Cape Disappointment at the mouth of the Columbia River plus the Cap-de-Rosiers lighthouse on the south side of the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. The nearest bonus north of the 60th parallel was Watson Lake, Yukon territory on the Alaska Highway. Either option being a very tall order at that juncture of the rally.

Riders who skipped the Kennewick bonus and went north needed at least one bonus north of the 60th parallel, again Watson Lake was the closest. But there were other options and opportunities for points. Tuktoyaktuk at the end of the newly opened road to the Arctic Ocean made its first appearance as an IBR bonus. It might have been doable, if everything went perfectly, but no one took the bait. McKenzie at the Kennecott mine in Alaska required a long ride down a dirt and gravel road littered with old railroad spikes and rocks. Valdez on the southern coast of Alaska was at the end of a beautiful drive through the mountains. We will post the complete bonus listing after the finish of the rally.

Homer, Alaska, was also a lucrative bonus, however it was not north of the 60th parallel. If a rider went past Watson Lake and the other opportunities to claim only the Homer bonus and return, they would not have satisfied the requirements. Such a plan would have resulted in a DNF upon their return from the 7100+ mile run. Fortunately, it appears the "North of 60" riders have all collected a qualifying bonus. It remains to be seen whether they claim the bonuses properly and get back to the finish in time.

Rob Lightner arrived at a lighthouse bonus and was told by a very intimidating security guard he could not take a photo of the lighthouse. He called Lisa to ask what to do. Lisa spoke to the woman, who was having none of the picture taking idea. Hilarity ensued at Rally Central as Bob retreated from the conflict to take a photo from quite a distance away. We expect to see a photo with an arrow applied by a sharpie marker, pointing to where the lighthouse is supposed to be in the photo. Those familiar with IBR history and the infamous lighthouse incident during the 2005 rally are likely laughing out loud right now.



An additional detail surfaced regarding the dead key fob incident Jon Kerr experienced a few days ago. While Jon was trying to diagnose the problem, he was talking to 2019 rider and IBR vet Justin Long. It was not clear if this was in person or via phone. In any case, Justin was in the 2017 rally with Jon. Justin finished and got his 3-digit number, but Jon could not finish after a deer encounter left him with a broken leg. Jon did try to make it work out, even with a tib-fib fracture, but it was too much. Those who understand the bond IBR riders develop will not be surprised at what transpired between these two during this rally. If Jon had been unable to resolve the no-start issue, Justin offered to give up his rally and give his bike to Jon for Jon to be able to get to the finish and earn his 3-digit number. Kudos to Justin Long.

If Justin's name sounds familiar, he is the host of a podcast called Long Riders Radio. He covers topics of interest to the long distance community, along with interviews of riders, including IBR finishers. Besides being a stand up guy, his podcast is informative and entertaining as well. Google Long Riders Radio for your post rally podcast information fix. But give Justin a few days to recover from the rally.

Dan Crowley is out of the rally. He is OK, just not feeling well enough to continue.

John Coons' BMW took a dirt nap and damaged a cylinder. At last report, he was trying to source replacement parts to remain in the rally but was unsuccessful. He has borrowed a KLR to finish the rally.

Eric Bray called and described a crash during a deep water crossing in Michigan. He apparently hit a submerged rock which caused the tip over. His back was sore and one pannier was crushed, but he was back on the road. He was about 6 hours behind the schedule he set for himself, but was confident of salvaging the majority of his ride plan.

Steve Diederich and Micki Denton experienced what was described as a gash in the rear tire of their Wing near Lajitas, Texas. They had to get a roll back to take them about 100 miles in the wrong direction to Alpine, Texas, to get the tire replaced. Our last report had them back on the road and continuing their adventure.



Not where you want to have to park your rally Wing near the end of the IBR.

Bob Bowman called us sounding like a love-struck teenager. His wife, Sonya, has his personal GPS tracker link, so she could see his position in real time. She was on her way to meet him at the finish in Greenville when she realized she could meet him along the way, near Cairo, Illinois. With some quick thinking she put together lunch for her man and let him know where to meet her at a rest stop for a picnic before he continued his quest for points.

I wrote the following on Day 9 of the last IBR in 2017:

“When will an IBR Scribe get to cover a rally without having to report on a BMW failing and dashing its owners hopes, dreams, and two-year investment of time and money in the adventure of a lifetime? That was a rhetorical question. What the crap, BMW?”

In addition to the other BMW failures already noted, Ian McPhee has a failing final drive. Dan Simmonds, who did not start the rally, has stepped up to haul a final drive and tools north and deliver it to Ian. Their plan is to meet on the side of the road somewhere along Ian’s route and do the swap. It would be great to get a video recording of that action. We hope Ian can affect the replacement without much lost time and continue in the rally.

Eric Buskell experienced a minor get off at low speed and landed in a ditch after executing a massive run to Alaska. Yes, Eric is the now famous *HOMER!* With the help of a local, he was moving again just a few minutes after the Harley took the brief nap. However, only a few miles later, Eric called Lisa to tell her the engine would run and the transmission would shift, but it would not make forward progress in any gear. We surmised either the primary drive or final drive belt had failed.

As he was checking the bike, a local approached Eric, holding the broken belt, asking if this belonged to the Harley. Eric called us back and said the final drive belt was found but no longer functional. Unfortunately, he was not carrying a spare.

Additional calls to try to quickly salvage the epic ride did not find a replacement belt available anywhere close. There was the unlikely possibility of convincing a local rider into giving up a belt or perhaps flagging down a HD rider carrying a spare, however, he was in a remote area and time ran out for such a solution to allow Eric to get back to the finish in time and he checked into a motel.

At the time of the belt failure, rally staff had calculated Homer to be running about 2 hours late, but calculations for distances of such magnitude are usually not accurate. There was a good chance he might have had the time, barring any other issues, if there had not been an issue, or if a spare belt had been packed.

Perhaps as impressive to the staff as Eric’s ride, was his demeanor on the phone with Lisa when he knew his rally was over. Despite the trolls on Facebook ranting about tired riders who are a danger to themselves and others, Eric was speaking clearly and sounded alert. He was introspective and proud of the effort he made in the rally and the points he had amassed. He waxed rather eloquently about the beautiful places he rode, being a part of the IBR community, and the support from fans he has earned.

We hope he can get a replacement belt in time to get to the finisher banquet. Should he make it in time for the banquet, much like George Barnes epic DNF in 2001, Homer will no doubt be on the receiving end of a standing ovation.

As much as we respect Eric and his epic attempt, it is very disappointing for everyone to see a ride end because of the rider not carrying a critical and easily replaced spare part. Students of the IBR may recall Bob Ray's ride to Alaska in the 2001 IBR on a 250 Helix scooter. His drive belt failed, but he was able to replace it with the spare he had packed.

Gregg Lenentine arrived at the finish hotel in Greenville today, a little fragile and not eager to be hugged, broken rib and all. He seemed to be doing well and is looking forward to attending the banquet with his fellow riders.

John Harrison
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