

REGION E RALLY

June 5-6-7, 2009

The Region E Rally was held June 5-7 in Eureka Springs, AR. Eureka Springs was chosen as the host site due to the availability of accommodations at a reasonable rate and the great roads in the area for motorcycle riding. The Region E Rally always lists riding the scenic twisty roads as the main course of the rally. This year was no exception to that. There were 6 different led rides set up at various speeds to allow the riders to pick the ride and pace they preferred. This was not only done for the sake of safety, but to allow each rider to feel comfortable on the ride. They could choose a ride to enjoy the scenery at a very leisurely pace or they could move up the scale in speed to a ride in which they would feel more challenged.

The day on Friday was spent getting registered, visiting with each other, and individual riding as each desired. Some went shopping in the quaint town of Eureka Springs. Others went riding on their own using the ride maps available at the rally site or choosing a destination of their own. Cycle Gadgets, a motorcycle accessory shop just outside of town was a popular destination.

When registering, a waiver of liability was signed by all. Each was provided a meal ticket for Saturday night. They were advised that the meal ticket would also be the ticket for door prizes.

The Rally started with a Friday evening dinner ride. The ride took us about 87 miles through the more scenic areas immediately outside Eureka Springs. We rode over the Beaver Dam, past the dinosaur statues and on to cross the Golden Gate Bridge of Arkansas. This is a single lane wooden bridge crossing an arm of Beaver Lake at the town of Beaver. It is very significant for the locals as it saves many miles for them when they need to access Eureka Springs. It is also a significant tourist attraction which has many visitors each year. It is a supported, free standing bridge with metal supports overhead. The wooden planks lie lengthwise on the bridge floor as opposed to the more conventional crossways. The cracks between the boards are not wide so pose no problems for motorcycle tires.





After the bridge the route took us into Eureka Springs from the West. The ride ended at the Forest Hill Restaurant where a large meeting room had been reserved for the occasion. A buffet provided many choices at a very good all-inclusive rate. The food was outstanding as reported by many of the riders present. Following the meal, the group returned to the Country Mountain Inn's outside area. This was located just across the road from the Kettle Campground which co-hosted the event. We had a group campfire and lots of visiting. The 50/25/25 winners for Friday were John Stubbs and David Hudgins from Chapter X in Oklahoma. Each winner received \$44.

Saturday was the main day for the Rally. The day started with pastries and coffee for everyone. We then had a rider seminar on riding the twisties led by MSF Instructor and GWTA member, Kent Hott. The discussion was informal and audience participation was strongly encouraged. What to do in the event of an accident was also discussed with the group. All ride leaders and a description of their ride was given verbally. Maps of each ride and a written description were also available to those that desired. The ride leaders described their ride and introduced their sweep rider. The group was then given the time and location from which each ride would depart.

All ride leaders were to conduct a rider meeting prior to starting out. Each ride leader would let the riders know what CB channel would be used for their ride. They would choose a lunch stop to meet the preferences of the riders in the group. While the group was out on the rides door prizes were set out and tickets attached to each prize. There were sufficient door prizes that everyone in attendance had a door prize available to them. This was due to the generosity of Cycle Gadgets of Eureka Springs, AR, The Leather Shop of Ozark, MO and Gene's Gallery of Springfield, MO plus other generous donations of individuals and chapters. All was much appreciated by those in attendance.

When the riders returned from their rides they had but to match their meal ticket number to the ticket number posted with each door prize.

Steve Short offered a question/answer session on GPS use and touring tips. Steve is certainly one in the know on such things as his 2005 Gold Wing with 250,000+ miles on the odometer can attest. He is also a highly regarded and much respected member of the Iron Butt Association. Few have completed the level of sanctioned rides as has Steve.

At 6:30 a meal was served at the Country Mountain Inn outdoor area. The meal was included in the registration fee. Volunteers served brisket, pulled pork, BBQ chicken, hot links, potato salad, cole slaw, baked beans, rolls, cake and drinks. The food was prepared by Road House Restaurant in Eureka Springs. The cake was from the Wal Mart bakery of Berryville, AR. At this point, due to the Regional Directors being otherwise engaged, Steve Short had been asked to coordinate the rally at least until the Regional Directors could return. He did a fantastic job but is quick to point out that everyone pitched in to make it a success. Everyone's help is greatly appreciated.

Following a great meal and full invitation to return to the serving line so everyone would have all they wanted we had our awards ceremony. First on the agenda was a big thank you to our ride leaders: Bill Jarvis, Steve Short, Kent Hott, Jerry Burford, Bob Anderson, and Denny Kraemer. An additional thank you was given to our seminar leaders; Steve Short and Kent Hott. Appreciation for dealer contribution on door prizes was stated for Cycle Gadgets, Gene's Gallery, Ozark Leather, and The Wood Gallery.

The next order of business was to announce the Region E Family of the Year. Each State selects their state family of the year which then goes to the judges for the Region E. The candidates are interviewed in a process similar to the interviews at the national level. This year's high honor goes to Nick and Karen Nickolay from Kansas. They will now represent Region E at the National Level in Lexington, KY during Gold Rush. We offer them congratulations and wish them the best of luck!

The Greatest State Participation award went to Missouri with 25 participants. The Greatest Chapter Participation went to MO Chapter "N" with 15. The Most Senior Rider award went to Bryan Sowers from Chapter "P" in Iowa. The Youngest Rider was Austin Dagenais from Chapter "I" in Iowa. The Longest Distance Solo Rider was James Carble, Chapter "B" Texas. The Longest Distance Two-Up went to Vicky and Larry Henderson of Texas. Congratulations to all.

The statistics were that we had 77 registered attendees from 5 states.

The 50/25/25 winners for Saturday were Diana Carkin from Chapter "T" Kansas and Peggy Welch from Chapter "B" Missouri. Each won \$47.

Sunday morning, Steve Short offered us a short worship service. We had coffee, doughnuts, and pastries mixed with good visiting and many goodbyes. At this point all packed up to leave for their own homes.



This brings us to the saddest and hardest thing I have ever had to write regarding our rallies. Missouri State Director, Bob Anderson, had volunteered to lead the slow ride. This was expected of Bob as he is always willing to do all he can to help other GWTA members to have a good time. His wife, Glen, was to be his sweep rider. As it turned out there was only one other couple on the slow ride. They were inexperienced with the Gold Wing and riding the twisties. Bob is reported to have gone out of his way to be informative and helpful to them. Again, that is Bob's nature. The ride took them into Missouri along a very curvy route to Cape Fair where they stopped for lunch. When again they started out, Bob met an automobile on the third curve out of Cape Fair. The collision was head on. He was killed instantly. The curve was a sharp one so the second rider did not see the actual impact. We do not propose to know what actually took place. We do know that Bob was a very experienced and safe rider. We know he was leading a slow ride. Those facts seem inconsistent with any report that he had crossed the center line. We can't say for sure what happened. We do know that we lost a great friend and one of the kindest and friendliest individuals we could ever hope to meet. Bob will always be remembered for his willingness to help others and his love to talk with anyone willing to listen. He was a good one and will be sorely missed.

Glen, Bob's wife, made a comment on the ride back to the rally from the scene that will always be remembered. She said something to the effect that Bob died doing what he really loved to do and he didn't suffer. It takes a special person to be able to make these observations given the circumstances, but she is correct.

Bob is, I'm sure, riding his Wing in the heavens. At his funeral procession there was an escort of 40 to 50 motorcycles. I later commented that I only wish Bob could have seen that as it was something he would have loved. Glen explained that she was sure he did. She had no doubt he was watching from above and explaining everything to other angels in his new home.

Bob---you'll be missed.