

THE VOID RALLY and 'SOMETHING DIFFERENT'

The VOID Rally is another riding, bonus gathering, type Rally. This year beginning from three different 'start' locations, Pottstown PA, Brunswick GA and Jackson TN. Naturally, I requested a Jackson start and got it. The finish was in Fredericksburg, VA. The Theme this year was music, which seemed very unassuming at first glance. Visit Patsy Cline's crash site, Owen Bradley's statue playing the piano, Chet Atkin's Statue, Chet Atkin's and Kenny Chesney home town, Grauman's Chinese Theatre with the stars on the sidewalk outside, etc. in all there were 147 bonuses to chose from and plan your ride. See the below map. *[Editor Note: the map was not visible in the post to the rider's forum]*

The key to these riding rally's is to 'plan your ride and ride your plan' BUT there are a lot of unknowns and many dark-side forces (the Rallymaster's) trying to disrupt all planning and riding especially true in this year's rally.

THE PLAN: The Rallymaster sent the instructions, bonuses, etc. via email in 3 parts. First you received the basic rules and instructions with specific instruction regarding communicating your start times, and EXACT text message format including where the commas and spaces should be, AND some warning that all is not right in the universe there was a TBD (To Be Determined) space in the format!. A TBD means the sadistic Rallymaster has a surprise in store for you and you know not what. Part 2 of the instructions arrived and the iniquitous music theme came to full light---there would be an A side and B side to the bonuses just like vinyl records. You had to declare before you started the Rally which side you were going after and you could not change during the Rally. Although this added a little twist in the planning and made you decide some of your route before you got the Rallybook it was something you could 'plan' on. So with the above 147 bonus locations known I set about planning my ride, see Green Flags, and all was back right with the universe, there was calm order in it. My perfect plan was doable and I would have a podium finish!

Part 3 was received, immediately the universe was again spinning out of control, the evil minded Rallymaster again thought up another way to help push you off the proverbial cliff. After dutifully separating the A and B side bonuses he gave additional bonus points for combining some of them! What this did was throw my perfect route into the garbage and start to question everything I had done. Not only did he combine some A & B bonuses, there were as the Rallymaster put it in the second part ' your rallybook will contain bonuses not listed' in the data you had previously received. What that meant was every bonus description must be

thoroughly read to see if there were any quirks that must be addressed, like double points for declaring a Motel 6 in sixth place on your rally log. All in all there were about a half dozen more factors that I had not 'planned' on.

THE RIDE: There are those who question this, but I believe the Rallymaster's somehow control the weather! And purposely ordered rain and more rain for this year's VOID. In the dry comfort of my home I asked myself are you really going to ride into the predicted weather, and as always you tell yourself it is not going to be that bad and the weathermen are exaggerating, so you go ahead with riding your plan.

As usual the riders had a pre-ride dinner and much to the delight of the group Bert Powell showed up to give us a Memphis HOG send off and wished us well and safe riding.

The ride started when I texted my data and information in the EXACT format to the Rally HQ, and off I went. I create an ETA (Estimate Time of Arrival) for each bonus to know if I'm on schedule or not, and I was on schedule UNTIL it started raining, remember the rain that I discounted as nothing, well it had begun. The short version is that in east TN it started raining and two days later in east TN it stopped! In between was about 1200 miles. Between the rain and my own brain fart for not remembering the exodus of military personnel leaving Washington DC for Norfolk on Sunday afternoon, I was in disarray. For the first time ever I called the Rallymaster and told him I was 22 miles away from the finish and would be a DNF (Did Not Finish), I had been in traffic and had move 3 miles in about an hour, after all it was raining and wrecks were everywhere. After I got off the phone, I believe he talked to the traffic, and it immediately parted ways and I was 'on the road' again. I made it with **1 MINUTE** to spare, and turned in my ride log and riders packet with **2 MINUTES** to spare, thus the reason for no pictures in this ride report, I did not have time to download them before I turned my packet in.

So, in 22 miles I went from a DNF to a finisher. Talk about a roller coaster of emotion, pure frustration to whew I made it! However, the ride wasn't over with, I had to be back in Memphis for the Eagles Concert on Monday evening. My son had gotten my wife and I two box seat tickets and I was bound and determined to make it back in time, otherwise my youngest daughter said she'd be glad to take my place!

I had told the Rallymaster that I had to get back and could not attend the Rally banquet Sunday evening. So I waited around to get scored and once I knew I

wasn't in last place I headed for home, still raining and about 800 miles to go. There is no joy in crossing VA at night much less on a rainy night, but I was slow and very careful and my HID's did their job. I made it to I-81 and somewhere along I-40 about 1:00 am it stopped raining. While riding I called my wife, I very seldom talk and ride, but because I'm a one person business I normally take calls and tell my clients, I'll call you right back. Regardless, she asked how I was feeling and at that moment I first realized it wasn't raining, And that is when I thought this is SOMETHING DIFFERENT (thus part of my report title) no rain! She convinced me to stop for a few hours and I did. However, when I got up about 4 hours later, guess what, IT WAS RAINING AGAIN! It finally stopped raining and I made it home in time for a nap and the Eagles concert.

THE VOID is a great rally and the Rallymasters' put a lot of effort into making it fun. I'm in for next year. Total mileage about 2200 miles. Ride Safe, Robert